

Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions®

An Independent Health  company

PHARMACY BENEFITS NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019



Easing the pain of seasonal allergies

Now that spring has arrived, many are eager to get back outside to enjoy warmer temperatures.

But if you are one of an estimated 50 million Americans who suffer from seasonal allergies, you may be dreading the change in season as much as others look forward to it.

Allergies happen when your body overreacts to something that is normally not harmful, and seasonal allergies can be triggered by grass, weeds, tree pollen, or molds. Symptoms vary and can include itchy and watery eyes, runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat, headache, and clogged ears. In addition, allergy sufferers may feel “run down” during the height of pollen season.

For most people, seasonal allergies are not severe, and over-the-counter (OTC) medications are sufficient to deal with occasional flare-ups of typical symptoms. Antihistamines can help relieve symptoms of many types of allergies and are available in several forms including tablets, capsules, nasal sprays, and eyedrops. Examples include Zyrtec® (cetirizine), Allegra® (fexofenadine), Benadryl® (diphenhydramine), Claritin® (loratadine), Flonase® nasal spray (fluticasone), and Zaditor® eye drops (ketotifen fumarate).

In addition to treatment, allergy sufferers can help reduce symptoms by keeping windows and doors closed when the pollen count is high, using air conditioning as opposed to window and attic fans, and reducing periods of outdoor exposure.

As always, talk with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about medicines you are taking for allergies. If you're taking an OTC medication every day, or if symptoms become too severe, it might be time to make an appointment with your health care provider. Dependent on your symptoms, you may be referred to an allergy specialist for testing and a treatment plan that is right for you, which may include prescription medication.

Please direct questions or comments you have about the Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions newsletter to:

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We're here to help.

If you have questions regarding any of your pharmacy benefit claims, please contact our **Member Services Department** at (716) 635-7880 or 1-888-878-9172, Monday through Friday from 8 am to 8 pm EST.

Statins can lower your risk of heart attack or stroke



Did you know that having diabetes and/or heart disease can greatly increase the risk of heart attack and stroke?

However, the good news is you can lower your risk by taking a statin.

What are statins?

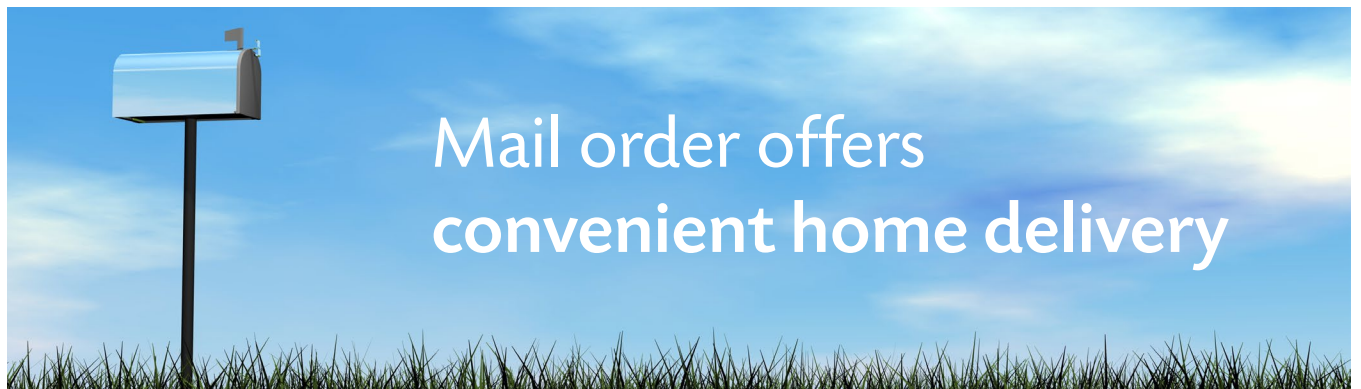
Statins are a class of medications that reduce the level of cholesterol circulating in the blood vessels. Without a statin, cholesterol can build up in the arteries and decrease the blood flow and oxygen to vital organs such as the heart and brain.

How can you benefit from taking a statin?

Statins are proven to decrease the risk of heart attack and stroke in patients who have diabetes and/or cardiovascular disease. Multiple health care organizations, including the American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology, recommend patients with a history of diabetes and/or cardiovascular disease take a statin even if their cholesterol numbers are normal.

If appropriate, talk with your doctor about your health and whether a statin might be a good option for you. There are six different generic statins available, so you may need to try more than one statin to find which works best for you.

If you have general questions about your formulary or pharmacy benefit, we encourage you to call our Member Services Department at (716) 635-7880 or 1-888-878-9172, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. TTY users can call 711.



Mail order offers convenient home delivery

Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions is pleased to offer mail order, a convenient and easy way to obtain maintenance medications.

Mail order is the process of having your prescriptions delivered directly to your home rather than having to pick them up at a pharmacy. As part of select coverage plans, maintenance medications, normally prescribed for long-term, chronic conditions, can be obtained via mail order. Maintenance medications are listed on our member drug formulary with the letters MO. In addition to being convenient, mail order can offer discounts on a 90-day supply of medication dependent upon benefit coverage.

For more information, please visit our website at www.pbdrx.com/Members/MailOrder.



Tips for safe medication disposal during “spring cleaning”

With the arrival of the spring season and subsequent “spring cleaning” that follows, now is the perfect time to clear your medicine cabinet of expired, unwanted or unused medicines. In an effort to reduce the chance of accidental ingestion or intentional misuse, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has detailed several recommendations for safe medication disposal.

1. Medicine take-back options

- **Periodic events:** The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) periodically hosts National Prescription Drug Take-Back events where [temporary collection sites](#) are set up in communities nationwide for safe disposal of prescription drugs.

This year’s **National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day** is on **Saturday, April 27 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.** Last year’s prescription drug take-back program set a record high for medication disposal with the collection and destruction of close to one million pounds of unused prescription drugs.

- **Permanent collection sites:** DEA-registered collectors are another option for appropriate medication disposal. In your community, [authorized permanent collection sites](#) may be in retail pharmacies, hospital or clinic pharmacies, and law enforcement facilities.

2. Disposal in the household trash

If no take-back programs or DEA-registered collectors are available in your area, and there are no disposal instructions in the product package insert, you can also follow these steps to dispose of medicines in the household trash:

- Mix medicines with a non-edible substance such as dirt, cat litter, or used coffee grounds
- Place the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag
- Throw the container in your household trash
- Remove all personal information on the prescription packaging

3. Flushing certain potentially dangerous medicines the toilet

A small number of medicines have specific instructions to immediately flush down the toilet when no longer needed. If your unused medicine is on the [list of medicines](#) recommended for flushing, and you did not receive specific disposal instructions with your prescription, you should dispose of it by flushing it down the toilet if a take-back option is not available.

For more information about drug disposal, National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day events and to locate area DEA-registered collectors, visit the DEA’s website. You can also call the DEA Office of Diversion Control at 1-800-882-9539 to find an authorized collector location in your community.

For additional information, see [Medication Disposal: Questions and Answers](#).