

Fairfax Family Practice Centers

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medications

New Health Care Bill Impacts Reimbursement of Over the Counter (OTC) Medicines

Highlights

- FSA/HSA/HRA changes take affect January 2011
- You may request a prescription for some OTC drugs
- Make sure to see your health care provider before getting a prescription even for an OTC medication
- Even OTC medications can be harmful if misused

The new federal health care reform law, now being referred to as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 has changed the rules for over the counter medicines and drugs having a potential impact on health flexible spending accounts (FSA), health savings accounts (HSA) and healthcare reimbursement arrangements (HRA).

As a result of these new changes you may have questions in relationship to how this may affect your care.

Does this impact me now?

Over the counter medications such as antacids, allergy medicines,

pain relievers and cold medicines are no longer reimbursable under your plans and will require a prescription from your primary care provider to qualify for reimbursement starting January 1, 2011.

What is the best way to obtain a prescription from my primary care physician?

For those patients requesting a prescription for an over the counter medication, an office visit is recommended to determine the appropriateness of the prescription. It is also an opportunity for the physician to assess the possible interactions of those medications (over



A patient exam is recommended to determine the appropriateness of a prescription

the counter and non-over the counter) which the physician may be prescribing for the patient.

OTC Drugs are still medications

Many people think over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are harmless, but they can be harmful if misused. And they are widely misused, according to Richard Roberts, MD, JD, past president of the American Academy of Family Physicians. So it is in your best interest to

come in for a visit and review with your physician your current medications.

Medications can have serious side effects when they are not taken properly or when they are combined with other over-the-counter

drugs, prescription drugs, supplements, or natural remedies. Here are some simple DOs and DON'Ts to help minimize negative consequences.

Prescription Medications - DOs and DON'Ts

- DO follow the exact dose and schedule prescribed by your doctor.
- DO ask your doctor about any possible side effects to watch for, and report any that you experience.
- DO ask your doctor about any and all over-the-counter drugs, prescription drugs, supplements, or natural remedies that you are taking or want to take.
- DO talk with your doctor about over-the-counter drugs, prescription drugs, supplements, or natural remedies if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding. Some medications or supplements may not be safe during these times.
- DO ask your doctor or pharmacist how to take your medicine properly (ie, with or without food, with or without milk, with extra water).
- DO tell your doctor about past problems you've had with drugs, such as rashes, indigestion, dizziness, or appetite loss.
- DO keep a daily record of the drugs you are taking.
- DO review your drug record with each of your doctors at each visit, and when any doctor prescribes a new medicine.
- DO ask your pharmacist for large print if you cannot read the label.
- DO check the expiration date and throw out any expired medications.
- DO call your doctor right away if you have any problems with your medicine.
- DO plan ahead for refills so that you don't run out.

- DO NOT stop taking a prescription drug unless your doctor says it is okay.
- DO NOT take more or less than the amount prescribed.
- DO NOT mix alcohol and medicine unless your doctor specifically says it's okay.
- DO NOT take medications prescribed for someone else.
- DO NOT let anyone else take medications prescribed for you.
- DO NOT crush tablets unless you check with your doctor or pharmacist. Some medications (e.g., long-acting formulations) have special coating and cannot be crushed.

Fairfax Family Practice Centers and all of our individual offices are committed to your health and well-being. Please contact the office nearest you if you need to schedule an appointment to discuss your health concerns with one of our providers.

RESOURCES:

The Institute for Safe Medication Practices
<http://www.ismp.org>

US Food and Drug Administration
<http://www.fda.gov>

Broadlands Family Practice - Ashburn

Office: 703.726.0003 www.BroadlandsFamilyPractice.com

Broadlands Family Practice - Brambleton

Office: 703.722.2312 www.BroadlandsFamilyPractice.com

Fairfax Family Practice - Fair Oaks

Office: 703.391.2020 www.FairfaxFamilyPractice.com

Herndon Family Medicine

Office: 703.481.1505 www.HerndonFamilyMedicine.com

Lorton Station Family Medicine

Office: 703.339.7550 www.LortonStationFamilyMedicine.com

Prince William Family Medicine - Gainesville

Office: 703.753.4999 www.PrinceWilliamFamilyMedicine.com

Prince William Family Medicine - Manassas

Office: 703.257.8090 www.PrinceWilliamFamilyMedicine.com

South Riding Family Medicine

Office: 703.766.5040 www.SouthRidingFamilyMedicine.com

Town Center Family Medicine - Reston

Office: 703.834.1473 www.TownCenterFamilyMedicine.com

Vienna Family Medicine

Office: 703.255.9100 www.ViennaFamilyMedicine.com