

# Healthy Lifestyles Cooperative

[www.healthylifestylescoop.org](http://www.healthylifestylescoop.org)

## Potential Co-op Experience with BidRx

[www.bidrx.com](http://www.bidrx.com)

BidRx is an Oshkosh-based organization founded by a pharmacist, Ralph Kalies, in 2006, as an alternative place to purchase prescription drugs at lower prices than local pharmacies. He solicited both pharmacies and mail order organizations to belong, and to provide their own pricing of as many drugs as they wish. The process is in the format of an auction, but in reality it is instant feedback regarding alternate prices at a lengthy list of participating pharmacies.

You must join and become a member, usually through your company. Then, you access the BidRx website using your username and password. Next you enter information about the prescription: The name and strength, quantity and term. Then, it will bring up the typical cost for your subscription, as well as a lengthy list of possible replacements ... generics and other strengths of the same drug.

You can click on any of these to get your list of prices from participating pharmacies and mail order organizations.

For sure, you will click on the top one ... your actual prescription ... to get its list of the participating pharmacies and mail order organizations. You will probably see a wide range of prices, because the organizations are deciding how much of the manufacturer's promotional and volume discounts they are incorporating into their price to you.

You might pick a pharmacy that's nearby, to which you can easily drive ...or you may see a great price at a pharmacy some distance away ... or a great price from a mail order company.

Make your selection and click on it. That will notify the organization to expect a copy of your prescription, and to get the prescription ready for pickup on the date/time you have indicated. You will then need to fax the prescription to that company. They probably aren't preparing it until they get the actual prescription. If it's a mail order organization, they will mail it to you when they receive the actual prescription copy. You will have provided your credit card information for payment.

Some tricks to consider before placing your order, but after you've learned what the alternatives are for your prescription. Go back to the original list that shows your drug, as well as a lengthy list of alternatives.

- Look for generics that might be much, much cheaper ... and click on those to see the alternatives.
- Look for your same drug, but at double the strength. If you were to order half as many pills at that cost, and split them to get the same effect, would there be a significant price break?

These alternatives are your next opportunity to get significant savings!

Often, what's happening is that the drug companies/distributors/pharmacies know the strength which doctors typically recommend, and raise that price ... often dramatically. So, switch to a higher strength and split it, and your savings can be astounding. Sometimes, as you will see in the examples below, the HIGHER strength actually costs LESS.

If you have such alternatives, go back to your doctor and tell him/her what you have found, and ask if you would get the same therapeutic effect with the alternatives. Often you can't, or there will be bad side effects, so it won't work. But even more often, it will. The doctor typically doesn't know what medicines cost, nor the specific impacts of the tricks we are describing. You need to inform him/her. If it's okay, a new prescription will be developed for you.

It usually works!

You may be flabbergasted to find out that you can get a prescription filled that is absolutely no cost. It's free!! What's going on here? What's happening, is that the drug manufacturer, and perhaps the distributor, are providing volume or promotional discounts that together end up being more than the price to the pharmacy of the drug itself. The pharmacy or mail order organization or BidRx will still make money, but is passing on much of the discount to you to get your business.

Take advantage of it!! What a deal!!

## **Examples**

Here are actual examples of prescription price searches conducted in March 2008:

### **Blood Pressure**

#### **1. Brand Name: Diovan**

Doctor prescribed 40 mg, 30 pills for 30 days. Typical cost is \$43 to \$53, and as a brand name drug has virtually no discount (\$41) available.

NOW, have the Doctor prescribe double the dosage, 80 mg, 15 pills to be split in half! The regular price is only \$33, and with discounts is \$11.08 at Agnesian Pharmacy in Fond du Lac ... only 26% of the regular price of \$43!! The higher strength actually costs less!

#### **2. Generic: Metoprolol Succinate**

Doctor prescribed 100 mg, 30 pills for 30 days. Typical cost is \$12.32, but available at Omro pharmacy for \$8.95, or via Lifeline Mail Order for \$0.00.

However, asked Doctor to prescribe 200 mg, 15 pills to be split for 30 days. Typical cost is \$6.64. NOTE: The cost of a pill with TWICE the strength, is only HALF the cost!! It pays to shop. YOUR COST is 75% LESS than what your Doctor originally prescribed ... and 85% less than the Brand name originally prescribed!

#### **3. Generic: Amlodipine Besylate**

Doctor aprescribed 2.5mg, 30 pills for 30 days. Typical cost at local pharmacy is \$36.60, but available at Omro pharmacy for \$0.00!! What a deal!

If you still want to use the local pharmacy, ask the Doctor to prescribe 5 mg, 15 pills to be split for 30 days. Typical cost is \$6.00. NOTE AGAIN: The cost of a pill with TWICE the strength is less, in this case MUCH, MUCH LESS ... only ONE-SIXTH!! Your cost would be 1/12th of the original prescription for the generic, and xxx% less than the Brand name originally prescribed!

### **Cholesterol**

#### **1. Brand Name: Lipitor**

For a typical 10 mg prescription, 30 pills for 30 days, costs \$68.32 at local pharmacy.

BUT!! If you ask the Doctor to prescribe 20 mg, 15 pills to be split to cover 30 days, costs only \$49.24 at local pharmacy!!

#### **2. Generic: Simvastatin**

Doctor prescribed 10 mg, 30 pills for 30 days. Typical cost at local pharmacy is \$18.80 (a Co-op member is actually now paying \$28.51 at her pharmacy), but available at local pharmacy for \$6.19, and at Omro pharmacy for \$0.00.

However, asked Doctor to prescribe 20 mg, 15 pills to be split for 30 days. Typical cost is now \$6.08, and at a local pharmacy is \$4.31, and at the Omro pharmacy is \$0.00. NOTE AGAIN: A pill of double the strength actually costs LESS! Savings!!

## **Diabetes/Insulin**

### **1. Lantus**

Doctor prescribes a 100 units/ml injection package. Typical cost is \$90. Via BidRx, the Omro pharmacy will cost \$56.26.

### **2. Humalog**

Doctor prescribes a 100 units/ml injection package. Typical cost is \$72.36 up to \$90. Via BidRx, the Omro pharmacy will cost \$64.46.

## **Men's Lifestyle (Erectile Dysfunction)**

### **1. Levitra**

Doctor prescribes a 10 mg dosage, 10 pills. Normal cost is \$130.49. Via BidRx, the Omro pharmacy will cost \$114.70.

Now, ask the Doctor to prescribe a 20 mg dosage, to be split. Normal cost is the SAME as the 10 mg dosage. Thus, you will get the 10 mg dosage at HALF the original price!!

Note: Through a chamber promotion, I signed up for free in January 2007. The above are either actual examples of my own prescription savings relative to my high blood pressure, or other research I did, sometimes for others. Yes, I did get prescriptions for NO COST!

Phil Hauck    March 2008