



# After the Alzheimer's Diagnosis: Practical Advice for the Caregiver

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UC San Diego  
SKAGGS SCHOOL OF PHARMACY  
AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES

# About Partners in Medication Therapy

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## An innovative venture of UCSD Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

- Mission is based on delivering best practices of care and developing innovative care models
- Goals include achieving optimal clinical outcomes and training future pharmacists

## PMT offers medication therapy management (MTM) services:

- Pharmacists provide MTM to help patients get the most from their medications by managing drug therapy and by identifying, preventing, and resolving medication-related problems.
- Clients include: Self-insured employers, medical groups, health plans
- Services to individual clients coming soon (Fall 2016)

## Clinical pharmacy faculty are:

- MTM providers, consultants to community partners, developers of new care models
- Licensed and credentialed in many pharmacy specialty areas

# Outline

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- Understanding Medications in Alzheimer's
  - Medication Management Tips
  - Avoiding Drug Interactions
  - Expectations of Medications
- Case: “Mr. Smith”
- How to Find a Part D Medication Plan



# Medication Management Tips, Avoiding Drug Interactions, and Medication Expectations in Alzheimer's



# Why do we Use Medications in Alzheimer's?

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## 1. Improve memory and daily functioning

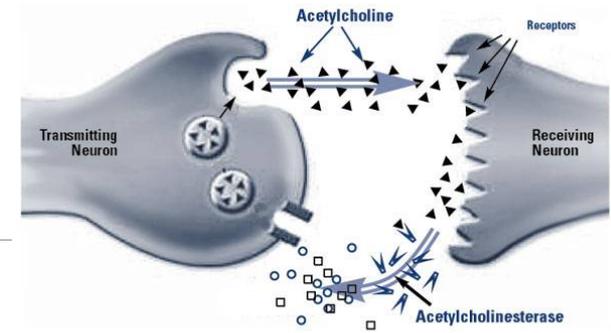
- Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors
  - For mild, moderate, and severe Alzheimer's
- NMDA blockers
  - For moderate-severe Alzheimer's

## 2. Treat behavioral and mood issues

- Antidepressants
- Anti-anxiety medications
- Antipsychotics (rarely used)



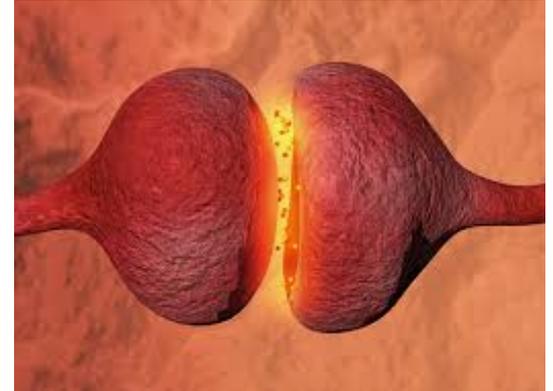
# Acetylcholinesterase Inhibitors



- Acetylcholine
  - Chemical for brain nerve cell communication (memory and thinking)
  - As Alzheimer's progresses, brain makes less acetylcholine
  - Medication stops breakdown of acetylcholine so nerves communicate better
- Agents
  - **Razadyne<sup>®</sup>** and **Razadyne ER<sup>®</sup>** (galantamine)
    - Oral tablets and capsules for mild-moderate dementia only
  - **Exelon<sup>®</sup>** and **Exelon Patch<sup>®</sup>** (rivastigmine)
    - Oral capsules for mild-moderate dementia only
    - Patch for mild, moderate, or severe dementia
  - **Aricept<sup>®</sup>** (donepezil)
    - Oral or disintegrating tablet for mild, moderate, or severe dementia

# Acetylcholinesterase Inhibitors (Cont.)

- Drug interactions
  - Increased effects with concurrent use
    - Tagamet® (cimetidine)
    - Nizoral® (ketoconazole)
    - Norvir® (ritonavir)
    - Paxil® (paroxetine)
    - Erythromycin
  - Decreased effects with concurrent use
    - Antihistamines (diphenhydramine, Benadryl®)
    - Bladder control drugs (tolterodine, Detrol®; oxybutynin, Ditropan®, Gelnique®)
- Side effects
  - Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle cramps, headaches, dizziness, appetite loss, and skin reddening



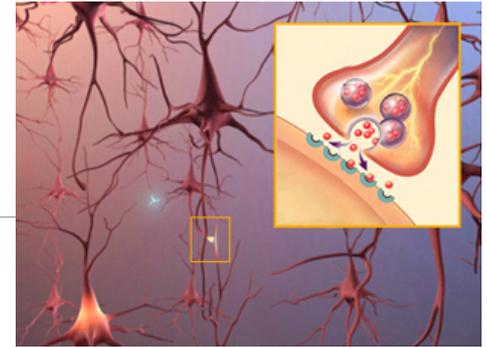
# Cautions and Warnings

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- Can worsen chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or asthma
- Can cause blood pressure to go too low or fainting in patients who have a low heart rate or in patients taking certain medications for blood pressure
- Can increase gastric acid which is a concern to patients with history of peptic ulcers or patients taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs



# NMDA Blockers



- NMDA
  - Stimulated by chemical called glutamate
  - Too much stimulation causes decreased nerve cell function and eventually nerve cell death
- Agents:
  - **Namenda<sup>®</sup>** and **Namenda XR<sup>®</sup>** (memantine)
  - **Namzanic<sup>®</sup>** (memantine + donepezil)
- Drug interaction with acetazolamide
- Caution in seizure disorders or with liver impairment
- Must use lower dose in patients with moderate kidney disease
- Side effects: dizziness, headache, constipation

For moderate-severe Alzheimer's +/-  
Acetylcholinesterase inhibitor

# Honest Expectations of Medications

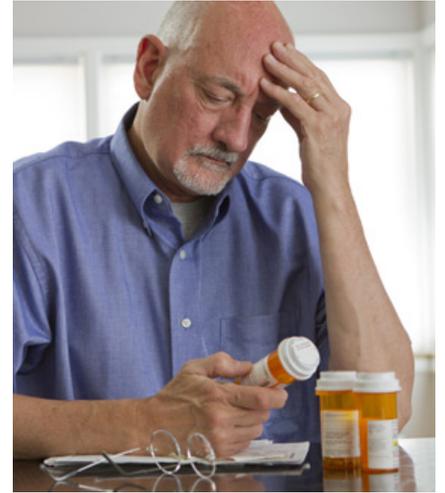
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- They are not cures for Alzheimer's
- They will not significantly repair damage
- They will not stop the ultimate progress of Alzheimer's
- Mini-mental status exam scores with treatment can be variable
- May see slight improvement in scores but many patients will not have significant changes
- With time, scores will continue to decline, despite treatment
- There are no clear recommendations as to when to STOP treatment, however, once unable to speak, move freely, or provide any self-care, there is little reason to continue



# Treatment of Behavioral and Mood Issues

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Sleep disorders
- Agitation
- Aggression
- Psychosis/delusions/hallucinations (less common)



**Use medications for these ONLY after non-medication strategies have been tried!**

# Mood and Sleep Disorders

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- May be dementia complication or a side effect of treatment
- Consider non-medication management first
  - Communication methods
  - Therapeutic activities
  - Environmental modification
  - Group support (Alzheimer's Association [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org))
  - Practice good sleep hygiene



## Mood and Sleep Disorders (Cont.)



- For depressed mood
  - Citalopram (Celexa<sup>®</sup>), sertraline (Zoloft<sup>®</sup>), venlafaxine (Effexor<sup>®</sup>)
- For anxiety and sleep disorders
  - Avoid benzodiazepines due to decreased cognition and fall risk
  - Consider trazodone (Desyrel<sup>®</sup>) at bedtime for sleep or buspirone for anxiety
- For agitation or aggression
  - Low doses of antipsychotics only if risk for harming others or self

# Medications that May Worsen Cognition

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- Anticholinergic drugs
  - Amitriptyline
  - Cyclobenzaprine
  - Diphenhydramine (Benadryl®)
  - Hydroxyzine
  - Oxybutynin (Ditropan®, Gelnique®)
- Benzodiazepines
  - Diazepam (Valium®), lorazepam (Ativan®), temazepam (Restoril®), clonazepam (Klonopin®)
- Other commonly used drugs
  - Carisoprodol
  - Clonidine
  - Indomethacin
  - Proton pump inhibitors (Prilosec®, Nexium®, Prevacid®, etc)



# Consider Overall Health

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- Successfully manage all other disease states
- Well-balanced, nutrient-rich diet
- Increase exercise
  - Increases mobility to maintain independence
  - Improves other disease states
  - Light exercise and walking shown to decrease wandering
  - Incorporate into daily routines and scheduled activities
- Non-pharmacologic management for cognition/memory
  - Crossword puzzles
  - Computer exercises
  - Reading
  - Word games



# Medication Management Tips



1. Know each medication (prescription and OTC)
  - What is medication being used for? What positive effects should I look for and when?
  - How long will it need to be taken? How much should be taken each day? And when?
  - What if a dose is missed? What are the side effects? Drug interactions?
2. If miss doses for several days, may need to return to starting dose and slowly increase
3. Create and maintain an up-to-date-medication list; bring to doctors and pharmacies
4. Use a pillbox to organize medications, use alarms to remind to take medications
5. Alzheimer's patients should avoid anticholinergic drugs
6. Be aware of medications deemed unsafe for the elderly (Beers Criteria)
7. Mixed results with supplements (gingko biloba, vitamin E, etc); talk to doctor/pharmacist
8. Keep medications locked up if necessary
9. If patient refuses medications:
  - Provide a calm environment, find out what is distressing patient
  - Explain what you are doing and be patient
  - Talk to doctor or pharmacist about changing WHEN administered or if crushing pills is possible
  - Wait 10-15 minutes to calm down and try again
  - Remember that behaviors change over time

# Case: “Mr. Smith”



# Case: “Mr. Smith”

Age/gender/education	90 year old male, attended some college	
Medical history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hypertension</li><li>• Chronic heart failure</li><li>• Arthritis</li><li>• Alzheimer’s dementia</li><li>• Benign prostatic hypertrophy</li></ul>	
Allergies	No known drug allergies	
Mini-mental state exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Score=21 (24-30 is normal, 17-23 is mild impairment, 10-16 is moderate impairment, &lt;10 is severe impairment)</li></ul>	
Patient/caregiver discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patient fell 6x in the last 2 weeks; no head injuries reported. He is bothered by his decreased independence, notices mood changes and irritability at bedtime, and has a hard time sleeping so starting using Benadryl®</li><li>• Previous physician started rivastigmine patch but was very costly (\$480/month) and didn’t help; no longer using</li></ul>	

# “Mr. Smith’s” Current Medications

Drug		Take for...	When do I take it?				Instructions
Name	Dose		Morning	Noon	Evening	Bedtime	
Furosemide (Lasix®)	40 mg	Blood pressure	X				Take daily
Metoprolol (Lopressor®)	25 mg	Blood pressure/ heart rate	X		X		Take twice daily
Klor-Con®	20 mg	Potassium supplement	X		X		Take twice daily
Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)	500 mg	Arthritis pain	X		X		Take twice daily
Aspirin	81 mg	Heart health	X				Take daily
Tamsulosin (Flomax®)	0.4 mg	Prostate			X		Take at night
Diphenhydramine (Benadryl®)	25 mg	Sleep				X	Take at night

# Areas for Discussion

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Dementia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not on any agent</li><li>• Recommend trial of donepezil 5 mg at bedtime</li></ul>
Sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stop Benadryl<sup>®</sup> as this may be worsening cognition</li><li>• Consider sertraline 25 mg at bedtime for mood/sleep</li><li>• Practice good sleep hygiene</li></ul>
Mood	
Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check that socks/shoes are non-slippery</li><li>• Remove home hazards</li><li>• Light up living space</li><li>• Use assistive devices</li></ul>

# “Mr. Smith’s” Personalized Medication Record

Drug		Take for...	When do I take it?				Doctor	Instructions
Name	Dose		Morning	Noon	Evening	Bedtime		
Furosemide (Lasix®)	40 mg	Blood pressure	X				Moore	Take daily
Metoprolol (Lopressor®)	25 mg	Blood pressure/ heart rate	X		X		Moore	Take twice daily
Klor-Con®	20 mg	Potassium supplement	X		X		Moore	Take twice daily
Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)	500 mg	Arthritis pain	X		X		Moore	Take twice daily
Aspirin	81 mg	Heart health	X				Moore	Take daily
Tamsulosin (Flomax®)	0.4 mg	Prostate			X		Moore	Take at night
Diphenhydramine (Benadryl®)	25 mg	Sleep				X	OTC	Consider stopping
Donepezil (Aricept®)	5 mg	Memory				X		Consider starting; discuss with Dr. Moore at next visit
Sertraline (Zoloft®)	25 mg	Mood and sleep				X		Consider starting; discuss with Dr. Moore at next visit

# “Mr. Smith’s” Medication Action Plan (MAP)

The list below has important action steps to help you get the most from your medications.  
Follow the checklist to help you work with your pharmacist and doctor to manage your medications  
AND make notes of your actions to each item on your list.

Action Steps (What I need to do...)	Notes (What I did and when I did it...)
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss with Dr. Moore: Consider starting <b>donepezil</b> 5 mg, one tablet at bedtime for mild memory loss/dementia.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss with Dr. Moore: Consider starting <b>sertraline</b> 25 mg, one tablet at bedtime for mood and sleep.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend <b>STOP</b> Benadryl® (diphenhydramine) 25 mg due to increased likeliness for falls, drowsiness, and possible drug interaction with previous Alzheimer’s medication and newly recommended one above.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend initiate non-pharmacologic options: <input type="checkbox"/> Increase walking to 10-15 minutes/day <input type="checkbox"/> Watch for fall risks (wear non-slip shoes/socks, remove home hazards, light up living space, use assistive devices)	

# How to Find a Medicare Part D Plan



Home

## Medicare Plan Finder

You have the option to complete a general or personalized plan search. A personalized search may provide you with more accurate cost estimates and coverage information. To begin your plan search, please choose from one of these options below.

### General Search

A general plan search only requires your zip code.

ZIP Code:

By selecting this button you are agreeing to the terms and conditions of the [User Agreement](#)

[Find Plans](#)

### Personalized Search

A personalized plan search requires your zip code and complete Medicare information. This page is secured to protect your personal information. If you don't want to enter your Medicare information, you may use the general search option above.

ZIP Code:

Medicare Number:   
Example: 123456789A

Where can I find my Medicare Number?

Last Name:

Effective Date for Part A:

Not Part A? Select here.

Date of Birth:

By selecting this button you are agreeing to the terms and conditions of the [User Agreement](#)

[Find Plans](#)



### Plan Finder Multimedia

Step by step overview on how to complete a plan search

Lesson 1- Getting Started

Getting to the Medicare Plan Finder



[View more videos](#)



### Additional Tools

- ♦ [Find PACE Plan\(s\)](#)
- ♦ [Find and compare Medigap policies](#)
- ♦ [Search by plan name and/or ID](#)
- ♦ [Enroll now](#)
- ♦ [Check your enrollment](#)
- ♦ [Medicare complaint form](#)

### Related Resources

- ♦ [Extra Help paying for Medicare prescription drug coverage](#)
- ♦ [Helpful contacts](#)
- ♦ [6 ways to lower your drug costs](#)
- ♦ [Download Plan Finder databases](#)
- ♦ [Helpful Tips](#)

# Step 1 of 4: Enter Information

All fields on the page are required unless noted as Optional.

## How do you get your Medicare coverage?

- Original Medicare [?]
- Medicare Health Plan (such as an HMO, PPO, or Private-Fee-for-Service plan) [?]
- I don't have any Medicare coverage yet
- I don't know what coverage I have

## Do you get help from Medicare or your state to pay your Medicare prescription drug costs?

- I get help from Medicaid [?]
- I get Supplemental Security Income [?]
- I belong to a Medicare Savings Program (MSP) [?]
- I applied for and got Extra Help through Social Security
- I don't get any Extra Help [?]
- I don't know

[Go Back](#)

[Continue to Plan Results](#) ▶

[Back to Top](#) ↕

[Home](#)

Medicare.gov

A federal government website managed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21244



### Sign Up / Change Plans

[Your Medicare Costs](#)

[What Medicare Covers](#)

[Drug Coverage \(Part D\)](#)

[Supplements & Other Insurance](#)

[Claims & Appeals](#)

[Manage Your Health](#)

[Forms, Help & Resources](#)

### Take Action

[Find health & drug plans](#)

[Find doctors, providers, hospitals & plans](#)

[Where can I get covered medical items?](#)

[Get Medicare forms](#)

[Publications](#)

[Information in other languages](#)

[Phone numbers & websites](#)

### Helpful Links

[Site Map](#)

[Site policies & important links](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

[Nondiscrimination](#)

[Accessibility](#)

[FOIA](#)

[No Fear Act](#)

[USA.gov](#)

# Step 2 of 4: Enter Your Drugs

Please select the information (e.g. dosing frequency) as prescribed by your doctor. Failure to enter information consistent with your prescription may result in the display of inaccurate pricing information. For example, if you select a frequency greater than that prescribed by your doctor, it may result in the display of the full drug cost rather than the appropriate cost-sharing amount. This will help us estimate your costs and allow you to see which plans cover your drugs. The site doesn't show pricing for most over the counter drugs or diabetic supplies. For more information, you may contact the plan.

[I don't take any drugs](#) [I don't want to add drugs now](#)

## My Current Profile

Zip Code: 92064

Current Coverage: Original Medicare

Current Subsidy: No Extra Help [?]

[Important Coverage Information](#)

### Type the name of your drug:

[Find My Drug](#)

Or Browse A-Z:

A B C D E F G H I J K L  
M N O P Q R S T U V W X  
Y Z

[Help with common drug abbreviations](#)

[Hints on how to enter drug information](#)

[Why can't I find my drug?](#)

### Retrieve My Saved Drug List:

Your drug list has been saved. You can retrieve your selected drugs and pharmacies on future visits using this Drug List ID and Password Date.

Your personal information cannot be accessed using your drug ID list. Medicare doesn't share the drug information you enter.

Drug List ID: 8179553536

Password Date: 7/9/2016 ([change date](#))

Zip Code: 92064

[Use a different drug list ID](#)

### My Drug List (Maximum 25 Drugs)

Total Drugs in My Drug List: 6 [Print My Drug List](#)

MEDICINE NAME	QUANTITY	FREQUENCY & PHARMACY	GENERIC OPTIONS	ACTION
Donepezil Hydrochloride TAB 5MG	30	Every 1 Month Retail Pharmacy	Already Generic	<a href="#">Change dose</a> <a href="#">Add</a> <a href="#">Remove</a>
Furosemide TAB 40MG	30	Every 1 Month Retail Pharmacy	Already Generic (You originally entered Lasix) <a href="#">Switch Back</a>	<a href="#">Change dose</a> <a href="#">Add</a> <a href="#">Remove</a>
Klor-Con M20 TAB 20MEQ ER	60	Every 1 Month Retail Pharmacy	Already Generic	<a href="#">Change dose</a> <a href="#">Add</a> <a href="#">Remove</a>
Metoprolol Tartrate TAB 25MG	60	Every 1 Month Retail Pharmacy	Already Generic	<a href="#">Change dose</a> <a href="#">Add</a> <a href="#">Remove</a>
Sertraline Hcl TAB 25MG	30	Every 1 Month Retail Pharmacy	Already Generic	<a href="#">Change dose</a> <a href="#">Add</a> <a href="#">Remove</a>
Tamsulosin Hcl CAP 0.4MG	30	Every 1 Month Retail Pharmacy	Already Generic	<a href="#">Change dose</a> <a href="#">Add</a> <a href="#">Remove</a>

My Drug List is Complete

## Step 3 of 4: Select Your Pharmacies

Please select up to two pharmacies to get a better estimate of how much your prescription drugs will cost. If your pharmacy isn't in a plan's network, the cost you will see is the full price of the drug with no insurance. Also note that some plans offer lower drug prices at preferred network pharmacies, compared to other pharmacies in the network.

**My Current Profile**

**Zip Code:** 92064  
**Current Coverage:** Original Medicare  
**Current Subsidy:** No Extra Help [?]  
**Drug List ID:** 8179553536  
**Password Date:** 07/09/2016  
[Important Coverage Information](#)

[Continue to Plan Results](#) ▶

We found **14** pharmacies within  miles of 92064

### Your Selected Pharmacies

**CVS Pharmacy**  
 12358 Poway Road  
 Poway, CA 92064  
 1-858-748-9220  
[Remove Pharmacy](#)

**Walgreens**  
 13390 Poway Rd  
 Poway, CA 92064  
 1-858-435-7580  
[Remove Pharmacy](#)

### Available Pharmacies

Add to Selected Pharmacies

**1st Choice Pharmacy**  
 13025 Pomerado Road  
 Poway, CA 92064  
 1-858-218-3180  
[Add Pharmacy](#)

**Advanced Orthopedic Center**  
 15525 Pomerado Rd  
 Ste E6  
 Poway, CA 92064  
 1-858-451-2280  
[Add Pharmacy](#)

**Costco Pharmacy**  
 12155 Tech Center Drive  
 Poway, CA 92064  
 1-858-848-2478  
[Add Pharmacy](#)

**Cpms Medical Group Inc**  
 15725 Pomerado Rd Ste 107  
 Poway, CA 92064  
 1-858-453-7700  
[Add Pharmacy](#)

## - Your Current Plan(s)

### Original Medicare (H0001-001-0)

Includes Part A (Hospital Insurance) and/or Part B (Medical Insurance) - Excludes Part D Drug Coverage

Estimated Annual Drug Costs: [?]	Monthly Premium: [?]	Deductibles: [?] and Drug Copay [?] / Coinsurance: [?]	Health Benefits: [?]	Drug Coverage [?] , Drug Restrictions [?]	Estimated Annual Health and Drug Costs: [?]	Overall Star Rating: [?]
<b>Retail</b> Cost as of Today: \$2,309	Standard Part B: \$104.90	Part B Deductible: \$166	Doctor Choice: Any Willing Doctor  Out of Pocket Spending Limit: Not Applicable  	N/A	\$9,010 Includes \$5,543 for drug costs	Not Available

## - Prescription Drug Plans

Star Ratings

26 plans were found in **92064** based on your search criteria. View 10 [View 20](#) [View All](#)

Compare Plans 

Sort Results By

Lowest Remainder Of The Year Retail Costs



Sort



### Aetna Medicare Rx Saver (PDP) (S5810-066-0)

Organization: Aetna Medicare

Estimated Annual Drug Costs: [?]	Monthly Premium: [?]	Deductibles: [?] and Drug Copay [?] / Coinsurance: [?]	Drug Coverage [?] , Drug Restrictions [?] and Other Programs:	Overall Star Rating: [?]	
<b>Retail</b>  Pharmacy Status: Preferred Cost-Sharing  Cost as of Today: \$237  <b>Mail Order</b> Cost as of Today: \$406	\$24.80	Annual Drug Deductible: \$360  Drug Copay/ Coinsurance: \$1 - \$35, 25% - 40%	All Your Drugs on Formulary: <b>Yes</b>  Drug Restrictions: <b>Yes</b>  <b>Lower Your Drug Costs</b>  <b>MTM Program [?] : Yes</b>  	<b>★★★</b>  3 out of 5 stars	<a href="#">Enroll</a>

## Aetna Medicare Rx Saver (PDP)

(S5810-066) Plan Type: PDP

**Organization:** Aetna Medicare

**Members:** 1-877-238-6211

711(TTY/TDD)

**Non Members:** 1-855-338-7030

711(TTY/TDD)

**Coverage:** Provides drug coverage only.

**NOTE:** Health Plan Benefits are based on Original Medicare

N

Enroll

## Transamerica MedicareRx Classic (PDP)

(S9579-031) Plan Type: PDP

**Organization:** Transamerica Life Insurance Company

**Members:** 1-888-672-7206

711(TTY/TDD)

**Non Members:** 1-877-527-1958

711(TTY/TDD)

**Coverage:** Provides drug coverage only.

**NOTE:** Health Plan Benefits are based on Original Medicare

Enroll

### Fixed Costs

Monthly Drug Plan Premium [?]	\$24.80
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Monthly Health Plan Premium [?]	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

Annual Drug Deductible [?]	\$360.00
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Medicare costs at a glance

Monthly Drug Plan Premium [?]	\$131.50
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Monthly Health Plan Premium [?]	N/A
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Annual Drug Deductible [?]	\$360.00
----------------------------	----------

Medicare costs at a glance

### Estimate of What YOU Will Pay for Drug Plan Premium and Drug Costs

#### Cost at Walgreens

Enrollment Today [?]	\$237.45
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#### Cost at CVS Pharmacy

Enrollment Today [?]	\$408.75
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#### Cost at mail order pharmacy

#### Cost at CVS Pharmacy

Enrollment Today [?]	\$942.95
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#### Cost at Walgreens

Enrollment Today [?]	\$914.45
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#### Cost at mail order pharmacy

# What are the Differences Between Each Plan?

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- Each Medicare Part D plan is unique
  - List of drugs covered
  - Copay
  - Monthly Fee
  - Deductible
  - Coverage Gap



Specific plans change what they cover every year



Questions?

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Thank you for your time!