

## **Over-the-Counter (OTC) Non-Sedating Antihistamine Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: What is a Non-sedating antihistamine?**

A: A non-sedating antihistamine is a medication that relieves allergy symptoms including sneezing, runny nose, and itchy eyes without causing drowsiness. Non-sedating antihistamines are often preferred because they are “non-drowsy,” as opposed to regular antihistamines (Benadryl®) which may cause extreme drowsiness in some people. **Many of the non-sedating antihistamines are now available as over-the-counter (OTC) products in the same strength as the more expensive prescription alternatives.**

**Q: What OTC options are available?**

A: Claritin, Claritin D, Alavert, Alavert D, Loratadine, Loratadine with decongestant, Zyrtec and Zyrtec D (available mid-January 2008) are a few of the OTC non-sedating antihistamines available to members. Remember to check with your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about the OTC products. Products containing the “D” decongestant are sold behind pharmacy counters.

**Q: Why do all the name brand prescription non-sedating antihistamines have a \$50 copay?**

A: The over-the-counter (OTC) non-sedating antihistamines and generic Allegra are considered preferred and should be considered first choice in treating seasonal allergies. The name brand non-sedating antihistamines are considered non-preferred on the Prescription Drug List (PDL).

**Q: Is there a difference between the new over-the-counter (OTC) Zyrtec available in January and the original prescription Zyrtec?**

A: No, OTC Zyrtec is the same product used to relieve your indoor and outdoor allergy symptoms. There is no difference in strength. It is the same 24-hour original prescription strength Zyrtec and will have an average cost of \$25 for a 30-day supply. Instead of paying \$50 for a prescription, switching to OTC Zyrtec will result in a cost savings to you of approximately 50%, with an annual savings of \$300.

**Q: Are OTC non-sedating antihistamines options safe?**

A: Yes. They are safe and effective allergy medications that offer prescription strength relief without the need for a prescription. In addition to not paying the \$50 copay for a prescription, you will also save the cost of a physician visit charge. Note: Some of the products may not be approved for children < 6 due to a lack of safety and efficacy studies.

**Q: How much money could I save if I switched to an OTC option?**

Prescription Product	Monthly copay	Possible OTC alternative	Monthly cost	Your annual savings
Clarinetex <sup>®</sup> tablets	\$50 copay	OTC Claritin <sup>®</sup> tablets	\$17 - \$24*	\$312 - \$396
Clarinetex <sup>®</sup> tablets	\$50 copay	OTC generic Loratadine tablets	\$ 7 - \$16*	\$408 - \$516
Clarinetex <sup>®</sup> D tablets	\$50 copay	OTC generic Loratadine plus OTC generic pseudoephedrine tablets	\$15 - \$28*	\$264 - \$420
Generic Allegra (fexofenadine) tablets	\$10 copay	OTC generic Loratadine tablets	\$ 7 - \$16*	Up to \$36
Zyrtec <sup>®</sup> tablets	\$50 copay	OTC Zyrtec <sup>®</sup>	Approx. \$25	\$300
Xyzal <sup>®</sup> tablets	\$50 copay	OTC Zyrtec <sup>®</sup>	Approx. \$25	\$300
Singulair <sup>®</sup> (For allergies)	\$50 copay	OTC Zyrtec <sup>®</sup>	Approx. \$25	\$300

**Q: Will Zyrtec still be available as a prescription?**

A: Because the FDA has determined Zyrtec to be safe for OTC use, the manufacturer will no longer be producing Zyrtec as a prescription product. Only the pediatric formulations (chewable tablets and syrup) will remain available as a generic prescription AND as OTC products. When OTC Zyrtec becomes available, the prescription version will no longer be available for a prescription plan copay. **Please note: This is not a change to the prescription benefit plan.**