

# PharmacyWise

www.shpnc.org

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## Take Your Medicine – Keep Your Money

*Ask your doctor if a generic medication is right for you.*

Would you like to pay less for your medications without any added risk to your health and safety? Use generics. If you're taking a brand-name medication available in generic form, the generic could save you up to 60% of your out-of-pocket costs.

### Generics are safe and effective.

Generic medications and their brand-name counterparts contain exactly the same active ingredients in the same strength and purity. FDA approved generics are safe and as effective as their brand-name counterparts. In fact, 60% of all prescriptions filled in the United States are for generic medications.

### Talk to your doctors about available generics.

Lower-cost generic medications are now available to treat many common conditions including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heartburn and stomach



ulcers, insomnia, allergies and arthritis. Many doctors prescribe generic medications on a routine basis. However, your doctor may not know how much money you can save by taking generics. Always ask if a generic medication is available and appropriate for you, and take your Preferred Drug List for reference at each doctor's visit. The Preferred Drug List is enclosed in this mailing and available on the State Health Plan Web site at: [www.shpnc.org](http://www.shpnc.org).

### Find out how much you can save.

For personalized information on generics and ways to save on your medications, visit My Rx Choices® at [www.shpnc.org/saving-advisor.html](http://www.shpnc.org/saving-advisor.html).

### Shop around.

Be sure to shop around for your prescriptions. Many national and local retail pharmacies (especially in supermarkets) now offer generics at discounted prices. Generic medications may cost only \$4 for a month's supply or \$10 for a three month's supply. Check the list of discounted generics at each pharmacy.

You may also save money, time and gas by using Medco By Mail for your chronic prescriptions. Visit [www.shpnc.org/mail-order-overview.html](http://www.shpnc.org/mail-order-overview.html) for more details.

## Get Healthy . . . Stay Healthy!

North Carolina  
HEALTH  
Smart

Preventive services for adults are crucial to ensuring good health. Your physician is your best source of information for preventive services. **Be sure to talk to your physician about the following recommendations** for adults, prior to any medical screenings and/or immunizations:

- If you are age 50 or over, have a colorectal cancer screening.

- Stop using tobacco products. Receive free OTC nicotine patches! Find out how, online at [www.shpnc.org/wellness.html](http://www.shpnc.org/wellness.html).
- If you are at increased risk for coronary artery disease, take a low dose of aspirin.
- If you have a chronic condition and/or you are age 65 or over, get a flu and pneumococcal vaccine each year.
- If you are a woman, have an annual mammogram and cervical cancer screening.

- Exercise at least 5 days a week.
- Have an Annual Physical Exam with blood pressure, weight and cholesterol screenings.
- If you have diabetes, ask about generic ACE inhibitors or ARB medications to protect kidney function and have an eye exam each year.

For more ideas of ways to stay healthy, call a free NC HealthSmart Health Coach anytime at 1-800-817-7044 or visit [www.shpnc.org/nc-healthsmart.html](http://www.shpnc.org/nc-healthsmart.html).

# Did You Know That...



...as a State Health Plan member, you have updated pharmacy benefit information at your fingertips on our Web site?

For the most current information, visit our Web site at [www.shpnc.org/pharmacy.html](http://www.shpnc.org/pharmacy.html). The Pharmacy section of the Web site includes:

- Preferred Drug List (updated quarterly)
- List of prescriptions requiring prior authorization (updated periodically)

- Steps for filing a prescription claim
- *Much more!*

...you can register online to refill and renew your prescriptions?

To refill or renew a prescription, see the Web site at: [www.shpnc.org/mail-order-overview.html](http://www.shpnc.org/mail-order-overview.html) to:

- Review pharmacy plan benefit highlights and your pharmacy claims history
- Compare prescription drug coverage and pricing

...the State Health Plan is committed to helping you save money on pharmacy benefits?

Two of the best ways to save money on the cost of your medications include using generics and over-the-counter (OTC) alternatives to brand-name prescriptions.

Many popular brand-name drugs are now available as generics. Visit the Web site for a listing of new generics at [www.shpnc.org/save-with-generic.html](http://www.shpnc.org/save-with-generic.html).

Many prescription drugs are also now available over the counter. Common prescriptions that are now available in OTC form include several popular allergy and heartburn medications.

**Remember: To save money, always ask for generics and consider using over-the-counter medications.** See the Pharmacy section of the Web site, under "Ways to Save," for more details.

For questions regarding your prescription drug benefits and online personal service pharmacy information, please contact Medco Customer Service at **1-800-336-5933** or visit [www.medco.com](http://www.medco.com).

## Two Free Pharmacy Services for Members

### Specialty Pharmacy Services for Complex Conditions

Accredo Health Group, the specialty pharmacy division of Medco, provides important free services to members taking specialty medications. Specialty medications treat rare and complex conditions, including hemophilia, rheumatoid arthritis, cancer, hepatitis C, multiple sclerosis and immune deficiency.

Support services for specialty drugs are usually not available at local retail pharmacies. Accredo's pharmacists and nurses provide these services for using specialty drugs:

- Training on how to mix, store and self-inject specialty drugs
- Education to manage side effects and complex dosing schedules
- Access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Free shipping and supplies

Access free Accredo support services by calling 1-800-803-2523, or visit our Web site at [www.shpnc.org/specialty-care.html](http://www.shpnc.org/specialty-care.html).



### Extra Care for Common Chronic Conditions

Do you have a common chronic condition? Medco has pharmacists who specialize in medications for common chronic conditions such as high cholesterol, diabetes and asthma. These specialist pharmacists are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They are trained to work with you and your provider to ensure that your medications work together safely and achieve the best outcome.

This extra measure of care is free of charge when you fill your long-term prescription through Medco By Mail. The free services provided by Medco pharmacists specializing in chronic conditions include:

- Cross-checking current medications with your health history and available lab work for enhanced safety
- Alerting you when there is a potentially harmful drug interaction with any of your medications
- Staying current on the latest treatments for your condition in order to provide support in following your provider's care instructions
- Suggesting effective lower-cost treatment options to help you save money on your medications

To access Medco pharmacists specializing in common chronic conditions and begin using Medco By Mail for your long-term medications, simply call 1-800-336-5933. Or visit our Web site at [www.shpnc.org/mail-order-overview.html](http://www.shpnc.org/mail-order-overview.html).

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Members eligible for NC HealthSmart services are members whose health insurance is through the State Health Plan and who do not have Medicare as their primary insurance. Federal law prohibits the State Health Plan from using your personal health information to discriminate against you in any way or from giving this information to your employing agency/school or other unauthorized third party, unless required by law.