



Newsflash

Issue 2015.5

According to ProCare Rx's analytics team, the drug inflation rates year-to-date are as follows:

ALL DRUGS 4.42%
BRANDS 4.66%
GENERICS 2.95%
SPECIALTY 4.19%

Generic Releases

The following brand drugs have lost their patents:

Drug	Condition	Date
Moban	Antipsychotic	Mar 23
Rebatio Injection	PAH	Apr 1
Kenalog Spray	Inflammation	Apr 13
Bystolic	High Blood Pressure	Apr 16
Copaxone	Multiple Sclerosis	Apr 16
Carac	Solar Keratoses	Apr 20
Staxyn	Erectile dysfunction	Apr 22
Abilify	Antipsychotic	Apr 28
Lotronex	IBS	May 4

While we have done extensive research on these dates, there is a possibility that any given date may change based on legal issues or patent challenges. If we become aware of any changes, we will update this chart in the next issue.

Formulary Changes

For a complete list of formulary changes, please visit our website at <http://www.procarerx.com>

Drug	Condition	New Tier
Glyxambi	Type 2 Diabetes	Tier 2
Pazeo	Antihistamine	Tier 2

Previous issues of Newsflash can be viewed under "Publications" at: www.ProCareRx.com

Splitting Pills Safely

Splitting pills is a common but controversial practice. It can save money from your monthly pharmaceutical costs. That's because a higher dose is often not much more expensive than a lower dose of the same medication – it can be like buying two doses for the price of one. But consider the cautions.

The Food and Drug Administration recently called splitting pills a "risky practice" and does not encourage it unless it has specifically approved a drug for that purpose. Still, our analysis of the research has found that many drugs can be safely split as long as you do it carefully and with the guidance of a medical professional. Here are some tips:

Talk with your doctor or pharmacist first: Not all drugs are safe for splitting. Make sure you ask your provider whether your medication can be split. Some common pills, including aspirin, cholesterol-lowering statins, and those for high blood pressure and depression are good candidates. Still, your doctor might advise against splitting even those. Some people might have trouble splitting pills due to poor eyesight, arthritis, or dementia, for example.

When to consider splitting pills. The biggest savings comes from splitting brand-name drugs you take daily for a chronic condition. Alternatively, you might be able to save money and time by switching to a generic version of your prescription, if available. Also, some brand-name drugs that are taken sporadically, such as those to ease pain or erectile dysfunction, can be split, but the savings won't be as notable.

Use a pill splitter. Don't use a knife or scissors. Studies have found that pill splitters come closest to dividing medication into equal halves. You can find them at drugstores for \$3 to \$10. And some insurance plans offer splitters free of charge. There are also splitters to cut oddly shaped pills.

Don't split pills in advance. Do it on the day you take the first half. Take the second half as your next dose. That will help keep the drugs from deteriorating due to exposure to heat, moisture, or air. It will also help ensure that any deviation in the size of the one dose is compensated for in the next.

Some pills should never be split. Drugs that are time-released or long-lasting, and tablets that contain a combination of drugs probably shouldn't be split, because it's difficult to ensure a proper amount of active ingredient in each half. Pills with a coating to protect your stomach, such as ibuprofen should not be cut, either. Other pills might crumble or irritate your mouth when split. Drugs that require critical daily blood levels, such as anti-seizure medication, birth-control pills, and blood thinners, along with capsules containing powders or gels should not be split.



The following **New Drugs** were recently approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration and added to ProCare Rx's National formulary. Each drug will be reviewed at the next ProCare Rx's P&T Committee meeting.

Brand Name	Dose Form	FDA Approved Indication	Tier	P/A Specialty Medical
Corlanor (ivabradine)	Oral	Treatment for chronic heart failure	Tier 3	Prior Auth: No Specialty: No Medical: No
Ixinity (coagulation factor IX (recombinant))	Injection	Treatment for hemophilia B	Tier 3	Prior Auth: No Specialty: No Medical: No
Kybella (deoxycholic acid)	Injection	Treatment for submental fullness	Tier 3	Prior Auth: No Specialty: No Medical: No
ProAir Respiclick (albuterol sulfate)	Inhaler	Treatment for asthma	Tier 3	Prior Auth: No Specialty: No Medical: No
Raplixa (fibrin sealant)	Topical	Treatment for hemostasis	Tier 3	Prior Auth: No Specialty: No Medical: No
Tuzistra XR (chlorpheniramine polistirex and codeine polistirex)	Oral	Treatment for cold symptoms	Tier 3	Prior Auth: No Specialty: No Medical: No

Brain-boosting moves that work best

If you want to exercise your brain, there's nothing better than crossword puzzles – right? Not so, especially if you've been doing them your whole life. They aren't going to do much of anything, because research has shown that to reap benefits, the task should be novel. Instead, try learning a new language; it will promote new pathways for communications within the brain while providing an educating experience that leaves you better able to analyze and overcome challenges. Indeed, people who take on these types of intellectual engagement get diagnosed less frequently with diseases like Alzheimer's.

Not up for tackling Italian or Mandarin? Any challenging activity that requires you to learn a new skill, from basket weaving to ballroom dancing counts. And you don't need to bother with online cognitive-training programs such as Lumosity. Though you're likely to improve your scores on the games with repeated play, it's not clear whether your memory actually gets better outside of the computer program. That is the important question...and it is still ambiguous.

Which is better for headaches, ibuprofen or acetaminophin?

It varies by person, but for most run-of-the-mill headaches, it's usually best to try acetaminophen (*Tylenol* and generic) first. It doesn't pose the risk of stomach bleeding associated with the regular use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, including ibuprofen (*Advil* and generic) and naproxen (*Alleve* and generic). Exceptions include people who have liver disease or drink alcohol heavily, because the combination can damage the liver. In those cases, or if your headache is tension-related, then try over-the-counter ibuprofen or naproxen instead.

Seven Foods with Special Health Perks

Coconut water, chia seeds, acai berry – there seems to be a new exotic or hard-to-find “superfood” every month. So you might be surprised to hear that some items you keep stocked in your refrigerator or kitchen pantry also pack some phenomenal health benefits. Here are seven examples, plus tips on how to incorporate them into your diet deliciously.

A RED BELL PEPPER contains more vitamin C than an orange. Most people associate immunity-boosting vitamin C with citrus fruit. But 1 cup of chopped red bell pepper has more than twice the amount of vitamin C of a medium-sized orange.

Use it: Slice into rings; saute' each ring in a pan with olive oil and crack an egg into the middle. Cook for about 3 minutes per side.

POTATOES can lower blood pressure. Those starchy veggies get a bad rap because of their high carb content. But purple and white potatoes, rich in the minerals magnesium and potassium, can help to lower the risk of hypertension according to a 2013 review in the *Annals of Medicine*.

Use them: Toss cubed potatoes with olive oil, lemon juice, and thyme, and roast at 375° F for 45 minutes or until golden brown (toss every 10 minutes).

RASPBERRIES have more fiber than most other fruit. A cup of raspberries has 8 grams of digestion-aiding, fill-you-up fiber. A cup of apple slices has only about 3 grams.

Use them: Layer with Greek yogurt and high-fiber cereal for a tasty parfait.

PEAS are a good source of protein. You may have added tofu or beans to your diet as sources of protein. But green peas are also a great source of the nutrient, which builds muscle. One cup has 8 grams of protein, 2 grams more than you'll find in a large egg.

Use them: Whirl peas in a food processor with olive oil, garlic, lemon juice, and parsley for a healthful, hummus-like spread.

PARSLEY has a lot of vitamin K. A quarter-cup of this chopped garnish packs 246 micrograms of bone-building vitamin K, also three times the amount you need in a day.

Use it: Sprinkle parsley on eggs, pasta, and soups, or process it with olive oil, garlic, walnuts, and Parmesan cheese for a fresh twist on pesto.

POPCORN is a whole grain. This snack food is one of the most nutritious ones around, because it's a fiber-rich, heart-disease-preventing whole grain. Just be careful what you put on it. Loads of butter or movie theater “butter topping” can pile on empty calories.

Use it: Toss air-popped popcorn with olive oil and antioxidant-rich dried spices such as oregano and rosemary.

SAUERKRAUT is probiotic-packed. You probably think of yogurt as the go-to source for healthy bacteria to keep your gut in balance. But pickled foods such as kimchee and sauerkraut can also be rich in probiotics.

Use it: Look for refrigerated sauerkraut that hasn't been pasteurized to gain the full benefits. (But young children, people older than 75, and those with compromised immune systems should avoid unpasteurized foods.)

