

BlueLink TPA
P.O. Box 64668
St. Paul, MN 55164-0668
651 662-4593
866 477-1587



Important news for members who take Lipitor or Vytorin to lower their cholesterol

To help control costs, ensure quality care and keep your premiums as low as possible, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota routinely makes improvements to our drug formularies — our lists of safe and preferred prescription drugs known as FlexRx and GenRx.

Beginning April 1, 2009, Lipitor and Vytorin will no longer be on the Blue Cross FlexRx formulary. (These drugs have not been part of the GenRx formulary.)

You get the best drug coverage when you use drugs from the formulary associated with your health plan, so it's important to take note of these changes. In some cases, depending on your health plan benefits, you receive coverage only when you use a drug on the formulary. To search the drug list, visit

http://www.bluecrossmn.com/bc/wcs/groups/bcbsmn/@mbc_bluecrossmn/documents/public/mbc1_hl_drug_list.hcsp

If you take Lipitor or Vytorin to lower your cholesterol, you should talk with your doctor about switching to one of several other formulary drugs that effectively lower cholesterol, but cost much less. By switching to a different formulary drug, you can help control your cholesterol and save money each month.

Your doctor knows all about cholesterol-lowering drugs and can give you a prescription for a different drug that is on the Blue Cross FlexRx formulary (or the GenRx formulary, if appropriate.) But you have to ask your doctor. You can continue to fill the new prescription at the same pharmacies (and mail order) that you have used in the past.

What other drugs help lower cholesterol?

Lipitor and Vytorin are brand-name drugs used to lower cholesterol. The Blue Cross formularies include alternative agents that also lower cholesterol. These include several generic drugs that help lower cholesterol at a fraction of the cost of Lipitor and Vytorin. For example, the generics simvastatin and pravastatin also lower cholesterol but cost as much as ten times less than Lipitor and Vytorin. Both are on the FlexRx and GenRx formulary. (The brand-name versions of these drugs are the well-known Zocor and Pravachol, respectively.)

In addition, the brand-name drug for lowering cholesterol known as Crestor will be added to the FlexRx formulary on April 1, 2009. It is an option for those members who cannot reach goal cholesterol levels with simvastatin or pravastatin.

www.bluelinktpamn.com

Who is responsible for changing the drug list?

The Blue Cross Coverage Committee is responsible for final selection of drugs for this list based on recommendations of an independent Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee that includes actively practicing physicians and pharmacists. Decisions to add or remove drugs from our formularies are made based on the medication's safety, efficacy, uniqueness and cost.

After a thorough review of the available clinical literature, the Pharmacy and Therapeutic Committee and Coverage Committee determined that Lipitor and Vytorin offer no advantages over other cholesterol lowering drugs, several of which are available as generics, cost much less and are on the Blue Cross FlexRx formulary.

Does my doctor and pharmacist know about this change?

Yes, doctors and pharmacists are being informed of the formulary change.

What if I continue to fill my prescription for Lipitor or Vytorin after April 1?

If you don't switch to an alternative cholesterol-lowering drug on the formulary, and continue to fill your prescription for Lipitor or Vytorin, you may pay a higher copay or the entire drug cost, depending on your group's benefits.

Have other health plans taken similar steps?

Yes. Many health plans locally and across the nation have removed Liptitor and Vytorin from their drug lists to encourage members to use generic drugs that are equally effective, yet cost much less.

Can I still order a three-month supply of my new medication?

Yes. The process for filling prescriptions will not change. Formulary alternatives to Lipitor and Vytorin are available at all network pharmacies or through mail order. We encourage you to take advantage of the savings offered through 90dayRx when you order a three-month supply.

Visit

www.bluecrossmn.com/bc/wcs/groups/bcbsmn/@mbc_bluecrossmn/documents/public/mbc1_hl_drugs_90dayrx.hcsp for additional 90DayRx information.

Who should I call if I have questions?

Call your doctor to determine which alternative cholesterol-lowering drug is best for you. You can also contact customer service by calling the number on the back of your member ID card and talk with a Health Guide.