

Overpriced medications

The cost of medications has been skyrocketing for the last several years.

Who is to Blame?

-Pharmaceutical companies spend billions of dollars to research and develop new drugs and only a small percentage of medications actually make it to market.

-Corporate Greed. Just look at the obscene profits posted for all the major pharmaceutical companies

-TV advertising. A one-minute ad on prime time TV can cost over 1 million dollars per minute

-Pharmacy benefits managers (PBMs) and mail-order pharmacies negotiate prices from drug manufacturers for the insurance companies. Unfortunately, this only serves to create larger profits for the insurance companies rather than saving money for patients.

-Lawsuits against drug manufacturers cost millions and sometimes billions of dollars in damages and legal fees. These costs are then passed on to the consumers.

-Prior Authorizations demanded by the insurance companies cost doctors precious time trying to get a particular medication authorized for a patient. This process often takes 15-30 minutes-time that could be better spent actually treating their patient.

What can be done?

-Your DPC doctor buys generic drugs directly from the same wholesalers used by the big pharmacies. He can then pass the savings on to the patient and dispense them to you right at the office, often at a fraction of the cost charged by the pharmacy. The DPC price is frequently even less than the co-pay for insured patients

-Patients can advocate for themselves and ask their doctor if a less expensive alternative is available. Before filling a prescription, shop around. Check out the website: [Good Rx.com](http://GoodRx.com) to find the price of any drug at all the local pharmacies. You can go to different pharmacies for different meds if you can find them cheaper elsewhere.

-There are often older, less expensive medications which are just as effective as newer, expensive meds. Traditional doctors too often prescribe new meds based on effective marketing that convinces them that the latest are greatest meds are more effective or have less side effects, but this frequently is not true. These doctors have little incentive to research less costly alternatives for their patients.

-Healthy lifestyle to decrease need for meds. I would estimate that ~50% of all the medications I prescribe for my patients would not be necessary if patients would eat a healthy diet, maintain a healthy weight, exercise regularly, get enough sleep, limit alcohol/drug use and practice some type of stress reduction (Yoga, meditation, counseling).