

Essential Drug List

You're working hard to balance your health needs and pharmacy costs — and we're here to help. Our Essential Drug List covers high-quality, affordable drugs that are essential to your health.

What is the Essential Drug List?

The Essential Drug List is a list of brand-name and generic prescription medications that have been selected and are periodically reviewed through Anthem's Pharmacy & Therapeutics process for proven effectiveness, high quality, and affordability. The Essential Drug List includes all of the essentials, but is a focused list that offers pharmacy choice while ensuring there are no gaps in care.

How it works

Formulary drugs are on different tiers depending on your cost-share. Generally, drugs on higher tiers have a higher cost-share.

Why the Essential Drug List?

- Includes 60-65% of all prescription medications
- Offers a variety of brand and generic medication choices
- Excludes drugs that have lower-cost formulary alternatives, or over-the-counter (OTC) alternatives (such as nasal steroids, PPIs)
- Includes drugs that don't have OTC or lower-cost formulary alternatives
- Maintains clinical integrity without compromising quality and safety
- Was developed and is reviewed regularly through the Pharmacy and Therapeutic (P&T) process¹

Do you have questions?

You can call the Member Services number on your Anthem ID card. We can also help you find out whether a drug is covered.

Are all medications on the Essential Drug List?

The Essential Drug List is a closed formulary/drug list. That means, sometimes, one or more of the medications you take may not be covered or you may have to pay more. But don't worry, you have other choices for your medication(s).

Drug class	Non-formulary drugs	Alternative(s)
Antihistamine / Nasal Steroid (Allergy)	Levocetirizine	Cetirizine*, fexofenadine*, loratadine*
High Cholesterol	Crestor & Zetia	atorvastatin (Lipitor), rosuvastatin (Crestor)
Insulin / SGLT2 (Diabetes)	Invokana	Jardiance
LABA combos (Respiratory)	Symbicort	Advair/HFA, Anoro Ellipta, Breo Ellipta & Dulera
Oral contraceptive	Ortho Tri-Cyclen Lo	Multiple generic contraceptives
PPI (Gastrointestinal)	omeprazole, lansoprazole, pantoprazole, Nexium	omeprazole*, lansoprazole*, Nexium*
SABA (Respiratory)	Ventolin HFA	Proair HFA
Sedative/Hypnotic	Zolpidem ER	Zolpidem
Stimulant (ADHD)	Adderall XR	amphetamine combo ER
Thyroid Hormone	Synthroid	levothyroxine

This chart represents a portion of the most prescribed drugs listed on the Essential Drug List. For the full list go to <https://www.anthem.com/pharmacyinformation>.

*OTC – Available over the counter without a prescription required

What to do if a medication is not on the Essential Drug List

There may be times when a medication isn't on the Essential Drug List and your doctor thinks that another option is not right. The prescriber can request an exception review, which usually requires trying two other covered drugs first. Specialty drugs will be subject to a trial of the preferred drug on our list, if available, and subject to prior authorization. Prior authorization is when the plan reviews a drug first before it's covered. You or your doctor can call the number on your member ID card or visit <https://www.anthem.com/pharmacyinformation> and download the Prior Authorization form in our drug list search tool.

Want to learn more?

Check out the Essential Drug List at <https://www.anthem.com/pharmacyinformation>. Select **Essential Drug List** to see which drugs are covered and at what tier level, as well as information on dosage/strength options and prior authorization or step therapy requirements. Drugs in higher tiers usually cost more. If the list doesn't include the drug(s) you take, there may be a brand alternative, a generic equivalent or OTC options.

Talk to your doctor. Only you and your doctor can decide what drugs are right for you. If a medication you're taking is not covered, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about whether another medication that is included on the Essential Drug List or an OTC may be right for you.

¹ Anthem's P&T team is made up of independent physicians and pharmacists that quarterly make sure every drug maintains a high level of quality.

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