



***Family Voices of Illinois***  
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***Family to Family Health Information Center***

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## **Family Manual Fact Sheet - Local or Mail-Order Pharmacy?**

Health insurance plans, both public and private, frequently offer their members the option of obtaining prescriptions via a mail order pharmacy. You may want to ask yourself some of the following questions in order to make an informed decision regarding whether or not this option will work for you.

### **Deciding if mail order would work for you . . .**

- ✓ Where and how do I currently get my prescriptions filled?
- ✓ Do I have medications that I take regularly, or only medications that I need from time to time?
- ✓ How many different prescriptions do I have?
- ✓ How many different doctors do I see? How many of them prescribe medications for me and how hard or easy is it for me to contact them if refills are needed?
- ✓ What are options for name-brand versus generic medications?

### **Does the mail-order option offer any savings to me in terms of . . .**

- ✓ Money - do prescriptions cost less?
- ✓ Time and energy in getting prescriptions refilled - is mail order more convenient?
- ✓ Time spent maintaining records – does the mail-order pharmacy provide a pre-printed medication list vs. having to maintain my own records?

### **Figuring out if your current prescription pick up can be better through mail order . . .**

- ✓ How hard or easy is it for me to pick up prescriptions from my current pharmacy?
- ✓ Is transportation an issue?
- ✓ Is my pharmacy within walking distance?
- ✓ Does the pharmacy have a drive-through window?
- ✓ What are the pharmacy hours?
- ✓ Are there any 24-hour pharmacies available in my location?
- ✓ Does my current pharmacy contact my physician for refills?
- ✓ Do I have people who can help me pick up prescriptions?
- ✓ What are the co-pays and/or delivery charges?
- ✓ Does my local pharmacy offer delivery service? If yes, are there any limitations on the delivery hours and/or days?

### **Will mail order pharmacy delivery work . . .**

- ✓ Will my meds be delivered by US Mail? If so, how reliable is the mail delivery where I live? Is delivery available via certified mail?
- ✓ Are prescriptions delivered by UPS, FedEx or another commercial delivery service?
- ✓ Do I have a secure place to receive deliveries if I am not at home when they arrive?
- ✓ Can I choose the delivery method and/or the delivery date?

**Know what to do when my medication changes, medicine out-of stock, not filled correctly....**

- ✓ What options are available if my prescription(s) change?
- ✓ What options are available if a prescription is not filled correctly?
- ✓ What happens if I need a prescription which the pharmacy does not have in stock?
- ✓ Do I use more than one pharmacy for my prescriptions?

**Can mail order pharmacies provide accommodations such as . . .**

- ✓ Is pill-splitting service offered if that's a need for me?
- ✓ Can I get medication labels and/or instruction sheets in the language of my choice?
- ✓ Do I need special equipment to measure and/or administer or store the medication? What coverage do I have for the special equipment?
- ✓ Can I get a choice of medication containers - for example "child-proof" or "easy-to-open"?
- ✓ Can I get my medications pre-packaged by time and dosage?

**Does the local pharmacy offer any amenities and more cost savings than the mail order pharmacy in terms of . . .**

- ✓ A discount card which offers discounts on non-prescription items, based on my spending?
- ✓ A year-end report on medication expenditures for tax purposes?
- ✓ Other promotions/discounts on over-the-counter medications, supplies and other needs?