

Essential Drug List

Medication alternatives



An Anthem Company

The Essential Drug List is a list of prescription medications approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). We've reviewed these drugs through our Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Process, which considers a drug's:

- Effectiveness
- Safety
- Similarity to other drugs within a therapeutic class
- Affordability

The Essential Drug List is a closed formulary, which means that only the prescription drugs on the list will be covered by the plan. Drugs that aren't covered have cost-effective, high-quality alternatives available. There may be a brand alternative, a generic equivalent or an over-the-counter (OTC) option. Brand-name drugs with a generic equivalent available aren't covered on the Essential Drug List.

Some common drugs that aren't on the Essential Drug List are shown below. Other preferred alternatives may also be available. Please note, exclusions and limitations may apply. For details about what's covered and what's not, it's best to check the Certificate of Coverage or Summary Plan Description (SPD).

To view and search the complete Essential Drug List, members should log in at empireblue.com and choose **Prescription Benefits**. Information on dosage/strength options and any restrictions such as quantity limits, prior approval or step therapy requirements is available. Members can also call Member Services at the number on their ID card.

What if a medication isn't on the Essential Drug List?

There may be times when a member's drug isn't on the Essential Drug List. If the covered alternative options aren't right for a member, their doctor can submit a request for an exception. This process, called prior authorization, requires the doctor to call the Member Services number on the member's ID card or go to empireblue.com/pharmacyinformation to download and submit the prior authorization form.

Doctors can also submit prior authorizations electronically, which requires less processing time and possible real-time approval so members can fill their prescriptions right away.

For the most up-to-date information, members should log in at empireblue.com and choose **Prescription Benefits**.

Drug class	Medications not on the Essential Drug List	Preferred alternatives
Acne – antibiotic	Acticlate, Doryx, Oracea, Solodyn, Vibramycin, Ximino ER	Generic minocycline and doxycycline products
Allergic Reaction Treatment	AdrenaClick, Auvi-Q, EpiPen, EpiPen JR	Epinephrine auto-injector (Authorized generic EpiPen from Mylan)
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	Focalin XR	Adderall XR, dexamethylphenidate ER, Vyvanse
Allergies – antihistamines	Karbinal ER, levocetirizine	desloratadine, Zytac solution OTC*, cetirizine* fexofenadine*, loratadine*
Blood modifiers	Epogen, Mircera	Procrit, Aranesp
Cholesterol	Altoprev, Crestor, Liptruzet, Livalo	atorvastatin, ezetimibe, ezetimibe/simvastatin, lovastatin, pravastatin, rosuvastatin, simvastatin
Diabetes – insulin	Admelog, Basaglar, Afrezza, Apidra, Fiasp, Novolin, Novolog, Tresiba	Humulin, Humalog, Lantus, Levemir, Toujeo
Diabetes – biguanides	Fortamet (brand and generic), Glumetza (brand and generic), Riomet	metformin, metformin ER (generic Glucophage XR)
Diabetes – DPP4 combo	Kazano, Kombiglyze XR	Janumet/XR, Jentadueto
Diabetes – DPP4s	Nesina, Onglyza	Tradjenta, Januvia
Diabetes – GLP1s	Tanzeum	Bydureon, Byetta, Ozempic, Trulicity, Victoza
Diabetes – SGLT2/combos	Farxiga, Glyxambi, Invokana, Invokamet/XR, Qtern, Segluromet, Steglatro, Steglujan, Xigduo XR	Jardiance, Synjardy/XR
Diabetes – test strips	All except OneTouch & Accu-chek	OneTouch & Accu-chek
Erectile dysfunction	Levitra, Staxyn, Stendra	Cialis, sildenafil citrate (generic Viagra)
Gastrointestinal – PPIs	Dexilant, lansoprazole/ODT, pantoprazole	Nexium*, omeprazole

Drug class	Medications not on the Essential Drug List	Preferred alternatives
Growth hormone	Genotropin, Norditropin, Omnitrope, Saizen, Tev-Tropin, Zomacton	Humatrope, Nutropin AQ
Hepatitis C – genotype 1	Daklinza, Eplclusa, Harvoni, Pegasys, Sovaldi, Viekira Pak/XR, Olysio	Mavyret
Immunologicals	Actemra, Cimzia, Orencia, Otezla	Enbrel, Humira, Simponi
Migraines	Frova, Relpax	frovatriptan, rizatriptan, sumatriptan, zolmitriptan
Multiple sclerosis	Copaxone, Extavia, Rebif, Tysabri	Avonex, Betaseron, Gilenya, glatiramer, glatopa, Plegridy, Tecfidera
Nasal steroids & combos	Beconase AQ, flunisolide, fluticasone, Nasonex, Omnaris, Qnasl, Xhance, Zetonna	OTC nasal steroids such as Flonase Allergy*, Nasacort Allergy*, Rhinocort Allergy*
Respiratory – anti-cholinergics	Incruse Ellipta, Tudorza Pressair	Spiriva
Respiratory – anti-inflammatory	Aerospan, Alvesco, Armonair, Asmanex, Pulmicort	Arnuity Ellipta, Flovent, Qvar Redihaler
Respiratory – ICS/LABAs	Airduo, fluticasone/salmeterol	Advair, Breo Ellipta, Dulera, Symbicort
Respiratory – LABAs	Arcapta, Brovana, Striverdi	Foradil, Performist, Serevent
Respiratory – LAMA/LABAs	Bevespi, Utibron	Anoro Ellipta, Combivent, Stiolto
Respiratory – SABAs	Proventil HFA, Ventolin HFA, Xopenex HFA	ProAir HFA, ProAir Respiclick
Sedative/hypnotics	Intermezzo, Rozerem, zolpidem ER	eszopiclone, zolpidem
Testosterone – topical	AndroGel 1%, Axiron, Fortesta, Natesto, Testim, Testosterone Gel 1% (brand versions**), Vogelxo	testosterone gel 1% (generic versions***), testosterone gel 30mg/1.5ml, AndroGel 1.62%,
Thyroid	Armour Thyroid, Synthroid, Tirosint	levothyroxine, nature-throid, westhroid

*OTC - Available over the counter without a prescription required

** Qualitest and Upsher Smith

***Actavis, PAR, Perrigo and Prasco

Common medications not on the Essential Drug List (in alphabetical order)

Actemra	Bevespi	Fortamet (brand and generic)	Mircera	Rebif	Tresiba
Acticlate	Brovana	Fortesta	Natesto	Relpax	Tudorza Pressair
Admelog	Cimzia	Frova	Nesina	Riomet	Tysabri
Adrenaclick	Copaxone	Genotropin	Norditropin	Rozerem	Utibron
Aerospan	Crestor	Glumetza (brand and generic)	Novolin	Saizen	Ventolin HFA
Afrezza	Daklinza	Glyxambi	Novolog	Segluromet	Vibramycin
Airduo	Dexlant	Harvoni	Olysio	Solodyn	Viekira Pak/XR
Altoprev	Diabetic test strips – all except OneTouch & Accu-check	Incruse Ellipta	Omnaris	Sovaldi	Vogelxo
Alvesco	Doryx	Intermezzo	Omnitrope	Staxyn	Xhance
AndroGel 1%	Eplclusa	Invokamet/XR	Onglyza	Steglatro	Xigduo XR
Apidra	EpiPen	Invokana	Oracea	Steglujan	Ximino ER
Arcapta	EpiPen JR	Karbinal ER	Orencia	Striverdi	Xopenex HFA
Armonair	Epogen	Kazano	Otezla	Stendra	zolpidem ER
Armour Thyroid	Extavia	Kombiglyze XR	pantoprazole	Synthroid	Zomacton
Asmanex	Farxiga	lansoprazole/ODT	Pegasys	Tanzeum	
Auvi-Q	Fiasp	Levitra	Proventil HFA	Testim	
Axiron	fluticasone	levocetirizine	Pulmicort	Testosterone Gel 1% (Qualitest and Upsher Smith)	
Basaglar	fluticasone/salmeterol	Liptruzet	Qnasl	Tev-Tropin	
Beconase AQ	Focalin XR	Livalo	Qtern	Tirosint	