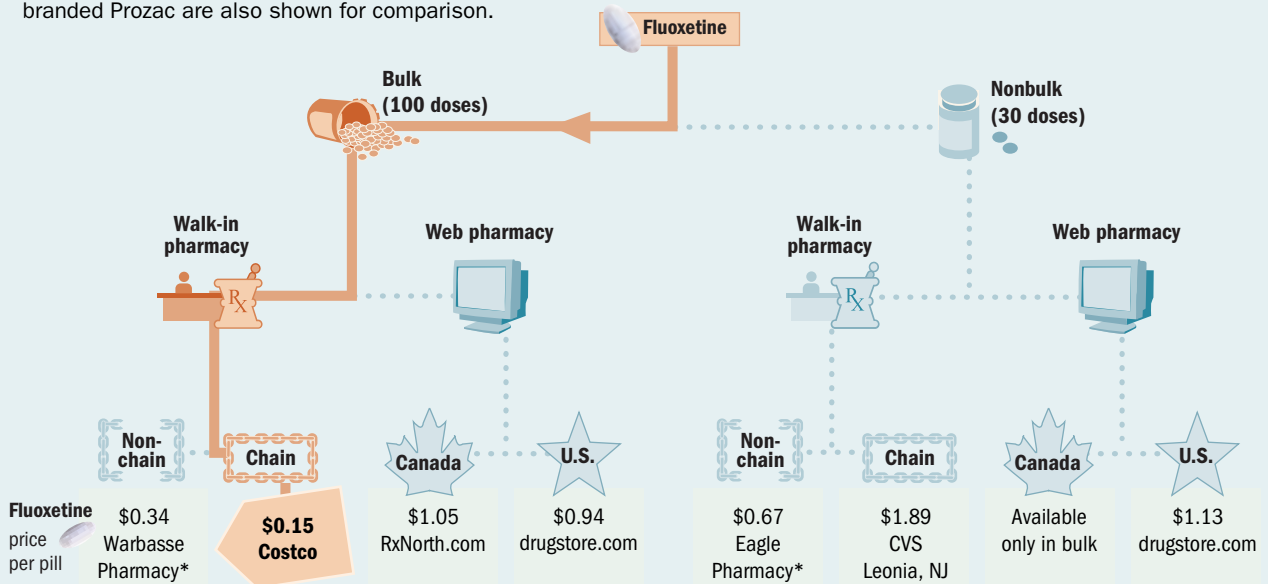
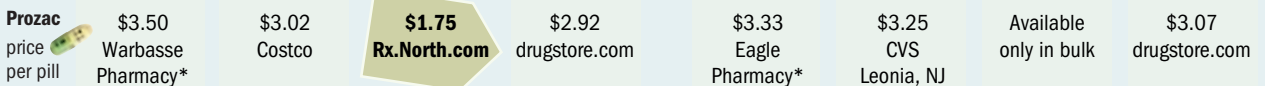


Routes to Savings

It's no secret that brand-name drugs cost far more than generics. But what's not well known is that there are considerable price differences in generics, depending on where you buy them. The chart below shows the range of prices for fluoxetine, the generic equivalent of Prozac, which is one of the most commonly prescribed drugs. Prices for branded Prozac are also shown for comparison.



For comparison, prices at same locations for branded Prozac



Shopping Tips

- Buy generic:** On average, brand-name drugs cost about three times more than their generic equivalents.
- If possible, buy in bulk:** Some, though not all, medications are cheaper this way, provided your doctor will write out a multimonth prescription.
- Web pharmacies are almost always cheaper than brick-and-mortars:** Be sure to consider shipping costs, and stick to sites that have VIPPS accreditation, a seal of approval from the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy.
- Consider shopping across the border:** For popular brand-name drugs, we found Canadian online pharmacies usually beat out their U.S. counterparts, but it's a closer call for most generics.

Don't assume chain pharmacies will have better prices than little ones: The New York Department of Consumer Affairs found that prices for the same drug can vary widely among pharmacies in the same neighborhood in New York City. In some cases, the independents charged significantly less than the chains.

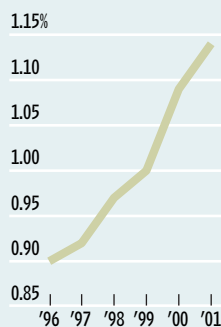
*Independent pharmacies in New York City

Notes: Prices for Internet pharmacies do not include shipping charges, which can range from \$1.50 per prescription to \$15 per order. Chain and non-chain store prices may vary considerably depending on location.

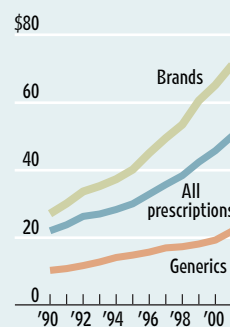
Sources: American Institute for Research (AIR) analysis of Scott Levin; Bureau of Labor Statistics data; IMS Health; NIHCM Foundation; Labor Department; Prozac credit: Phototake

Drug Prices and Spending

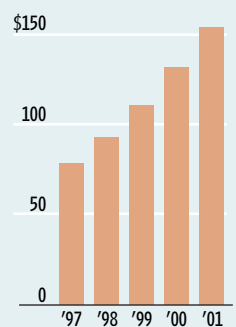
Average annual drug spending, as a percentage of all household spending



Average retail price of prescription drugs



Retail spending on prescription drugs in the U.S., in billions



Online Learning Tools:

www.DestinationRx.com – Searches the major online pharmacies for the best deals on prescription and OTC medications. A great starting point for your bargain hunting.

www.theunadvertisedbrand.com – Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's clearinghouse for information on generic drugs, including a savings calculator that compares popular brands to their generics equivalents.

www.aarp.org/wiseuse/oregon-table.html – the AARP and the State of Oregon teamed up to present this useful comparison on the safety and effectiveness of drugs that treat various conditions, such as high cholesterol and arthritis.