

Drug Quantity Management Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

1. What Is Drug Quantity Management?

Drug quantity management, also known as DQM, is a program in your pharmacy benefit that's designed to **make the use of prescription drugs safer and more affordable**. It provides the medication you need for your good health and the health of your family, while making sure you receive them in the amount – or quantity – considered safe.

Certain prescriptions are included in this program. For these drugs, you can receive an amount to last you a certain number of days. For instance, the program could provide a maximum of 30 pills for a medication you take once a day. This gives you the right amount to take **the daily dose considered safe and effective**, according to guidelines from the U.S Food & Drug Administration (FDA).

Drug quantity management also **helps save money in two different ways**. First, if your prescription is available in different strengths, sometimes you could take one dose of a higher strength instead of two or more of a lower strength – which, over time, saves money. For example:

You might be taking two 20 mg pills once a day. To last you a month, you need 60 pills. With *your doctor's* approval, you could get a higher strength pill. For instance, you could take a 40 mg pill once a day (instead of two 20 mg pills). One supply lasts you a month – and **you have just one copayment**, instead of two copayments for two 30-day supplies.

Second, the program controls the cost of extra supplies that could go to waste in your medicine cabinet. Taking your prescribed dose in a higher strength pill provides savings on drug costs and controls the rising cost of prescription drugs.

2. Who developed Drug Quantity Management?

The program follows guidelines developed by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA). These guidelines recommend the maximum quantities considered safe for prescribing certain drugs. Together with Express Scripts – the company that manages your pharmacy benefit – your plan used FDA guidelines and other medical information to develop drug quantity management.

3. What drugs are included in the program?

Drug quantity management includes **drugs that could have safety issues for you** if the quantity is larger than the guidelines recommend. For instance, it includes drugs that aren't easily measured, like nose sprays or inhalers.

Drugs that come in several strengths are also included. If you can take fewer doses at a higher strength, you save because you pay fewer copayments.

A list of drugs in your plan's drug quantity management program is available. Ask your HR administrator for a copy, and show this list to your doctor.

How Drug Quantity Management Works

4. Why couldn't I get the amount of the medication that was prescribed?

When you submit your prescription, your pharmacist sees a note on the computer system indicating that your medication isn't covered for the amount prescribed. This could mean:

You've asked for a refill too soon; that is, you should still have medication left from your last supply. If this happens, just ask your pharmacist when it will be time to get a refill.

OR

Your doctor wrote a prescription for a quantity larger than your plan covers.

If the quantity on your prescription is too large, you can:

Have your pharmacist fill your prescription as it's written, for the amount that your plan covers. You will pay the appropriate copayment, but you may need to fill this prescription more often – for instance, twice a month instead of once a month – which means you pay more often.

OR

Ask your pharmacist to call your doctor. They can discuss changing your prescription to a higher strength, if one is available. In most cases, if your doctor approves this change, you will have fewer copayments because you will receive your prescription just once a month.

OR

Ask your pharmacist to contact your doctor about getting a prior authorization. That is, your doctor can call Express Scripts to request that you receive the original amount and strength he/she prescribed. The Express Scripts representative will check your plan's guidelines to see if your medication can be covered for a larger quantity. Express Scripts' prior authorization phone lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so a determination can be made right away.

5. Does this program deny me access to the medication I need?

No. Your drug quantity management program **provides the prescription drugs you need in quantities that follow your plan's guidelines for safe, economical use.**

You're encouraged to have your prescriptions filled according to the guidelines your plan uses. A list of the medicines included in your program is available. Ask your HR administrator for a copy, and show this list to your doctor.

6. I need my prescription filled immediately. What can I do?

Your pharmacist can fill your prescription as it's written, for the quantity your plan covers.

Remember, although you pay your plan's copayment, the quantity you receive might not last a full month.

Ask your pharmacist to call your doctor about changing your prescription to a higher strength, if one is available. This way you could get a month's supply for the plan's copayment. You could also ask your pharmacist to call your doctor about requesting a prior authorization.

7. What happens if my doctor's request for a prior authorization is denied?

You can have your prescription filled for the quantity covered by your plan and continue to pay your plan's copayment each time you get a refill. Or your doctor can change your prescription to a higher strength of your medication, if one is available, so that you get a month's supply at a time.

Home Delivery and Drug Quantity Management

8. I sent in a prescription for home delivery, but I was contacted and told it's in a drug quantity management program. What happens now?

The Express Scripts Pharmacy may try to contact your doctor to suggest either changing your prescription to a higher strength or asking for a prior authorization. If the Express Scripts Pharmacy doesn't hear back from your doctor within two days, they will fill your prescription for the quantity covered by your plan. To save time, you may want to let your doctor know that Express Scripts Pharmacy will be calling.

If a higher strength isn't available, or your plan doesn't provide a prior authorization for a higher quantity, the Express Scripts Pharmacy can fill your prescription for the quantity that your plan covers.