

New OTC Expenses Now Eligible

When you participate in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA), you're able to contribute pre-tax funds for use on hundreds of eligible expenses. Recently, you gained even more flexibility in your ability to save when the CARES Act was signed into law.

This new legislation expanded the list of expenses that are considered eligible by **including popular over-the-counter products**, which consumers can now purchase with their FSA without a prescription. This change went into effect on January 1, 2020, and allows over 20,000 new expenses as eligible moving forward. That's great news for consumers, since the average American shops for over-the-counter medications 26 times each year.

Here are five of the most common expenses that are now eligible to use FSA funds without a prescription.

Pain relief medications

Headaches. Muscle soreness. Sprains. There are so many reasons to need pain relievers. There are two common types of over-the-counter pain medications: acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), both of which are now among the eligible expenses available from an FSA.

Cold and flu products

Winter may be behind us, but cold and flu season never really goes away. As much as 20 percent of the U.S. population gets the flu, on average each season. Fortunately, the over-the-counter medicines taken to cope with a severe cough or congestion are now eligible expenses.

Allergy products

Thirty percent of American adults and 40 percent of children suffer from allergies. And the cost of allergies to the healthcare system is estimated at \$18 billion. Those who do have allergies can now find relief with their HSA and FSA funds in the form of over-the-counter antihistamines and decongestants.

Heartburn medications

Heartburn is among the more common afflictions in this country. That's why Americans spend billions of dollars each year on medicines that treat heartburn. The CARES Act means that these over-the-counter drugs are FSA eligible without a prescription.

Menstrual products

The CARES Act also included menstrual care products as eligible expenses for FSAs. Eligible products include tampons, pads and menstrual sponges.

How do I know what qualifies?

- Consumers can simply scan a product bar code right in their mobile app to help determine eligibility as a qualified medical expense. That's peace of mind with a touch of a button.
- Online shopping for eligible expenses can be done on sites like FSA Store. This site is dedicated to items that are eligible under pre-tax accounts like FSAs.

How it Works: Use the Debit Card: Once retailers have updated their payment systems and inventories consumers can simply use their card to pay for these newly eligible items, but they should still remember to save their receipts in case the purchase needs to be verified later. Submit a Claim: Consumers can submit claims for reimbursement through their online account or using the mobile app.