

Will you reach the Donut Hole in 2019?

In 2019, the Medicare prescription drug plan gap, sometimes referred to as a “donut hole” closes for brand name drugs. Once your total drug costs (what you and the plan have paid) reach \$3,820; you will pay no more than 25% for brand name drugs and 37% for generic drugs. When you have spent \$5,100 out-of-pocket (that includes what you pay plus the 70% discount paid by the drug manufacturer for brand name drugs) you will pay the greater of 5% or \$3.40 co-pay for generics and \$8.50 for brand for the rest of the calendar year.

How can you save on your Medicare drug costs?

1. Review your current plan and do a comparison every year. SHIIP can help.

- A comparison will give you an estimate of your yearly costs, and identify if you can save money by changing plans for the next year.

2. Explore Part D Extra Help.

- Call SHIIP at 1-800-351-4664 to see if you qualify for extra help from Medicare paying for your prescription drug plan costs.

3. Switch to generic or less expensive brand-name drugs.

- Contact your doctor to see if you can change to a generic. This could reduce your co-payments and help maximize savings.
- You may be able to lower your costs if your doctor will prescribe double your dosage, (e.g. 20mg instead of 10mg), and you cut the tablet in half. You will only need to purchase 15 pills a month instead of 30. It is very important to check with your doctor as this cannot be done with all medications.
- Check with your Part D plan to see if you could save money using mail-order.
- Ask your doctor about free samples.

4. Look into Patient Assistance Programs.

- Many of the major drug companies offer assistance programs. You can find out if assistance is available for the drugs you take by calling your local SHIIP site. Call 1-800-351-4664 (TTY 1-800-735-2942) to find the SHIIP site nearest you.

For more information, contact the Iowa Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) at 1-800-351-4664.