



***Comparative Effectiveness Research  
And Consumers:  
Lessons from Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs***

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Consumers Union***

***September 17, 2009***



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Defensive eating at fast-food restaurants

A reasonably healthy meal can be had—if you're careful

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What's the best treatment for erection problems?

We reviewed the evidence and tell you what works and what you should avoid.

Our Ratings CRH

Common Conditions

Back pain
Cholesterol
Depression
Diabetes
Hernia

Heart attack
Erection problems
Prostate cancer
Testicular cancer
Varicocele

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Conditions A to Z | Drugs A to Z

Health Experts



Placebos can be good medicine

Marvin M. Lipman, M.D., Consumers Union's chief medical adviser and clinical professor of medicine emeritus at New York Medical College.

Consumer Reports Health.org

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## Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs



### Consumer Reports BEST BUY DRUGS

#### Free Guidance for Consumers on Prescription Medicines

Best Buy Drugs is a public education project. It will help you talk to your doctor about prescription drugs, and find the most effective and safe drugs that also give you the best value for your health care dollar.

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Your experience with prescription drugs can help mold our project. Help us to help others.

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#### by Condition

ADHD  
 Angina  
 Alzheimer's  
 Chronic pain  
 Depression  
 Diabetes  
 Heartburn  
 Heart failure  
 High blood pressure  
 High cholesterol  
 Insomnia  
 Migraine

#### by Drug Name

Ambien  
 Atenolol  
 Fluoxetine  
 Glipizide  
 Lexapro  
 Lipitor  
 Lisinopril  
 Metformin  
 Metoprolol  
 Nexium  
 Prilosec OTC  
 Simvastatin

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#### Also on Consumer Reports Health

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## Identifying CR Best Buy Drugs

- Start with credible source of unbiased, rigorous analysis of clinical evidence about drug effectiveness (DERP)
- Intense medical input through consultants, internal CU review, and medical peer review
- Selections based on effectiveness, safety record and price



Cholesterol-Lowering Drugs:  
**The Statins**  
Comparing Effectiveness, Safety, and Price



## ***Possible Annual Savings: 5 Categories***

- Statins  
(cholesterol) \$1,000
- Proton Pump Inhibitors:  
(acid reflux and ulcers) \$2,400
- NSAIDs  
(arthritis and pain) \$3,300
- Anti-depressants \$1,000
- Diabetes \$2500





Prescriptions & benefits

Health & wellness

Nonprescription items

Go to: [Prescriptions](#) > [Savings advisor](#)

## Savings Advisor results

Have a question? Need help? [learn more >>](#)

### 1 Review results

Zocor has lower-cost alternatives available.  
See details below.

### 2 Discuss with your doctor

Print out and discuss these alternatives with your doctor.\*



print

Search again.

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Get new results with different quantity and/or days' supply

[Click here >>](#)

Medication	Pharmacy and days' supply	You pay	Annual cost	Annual savings†
<b>YOU SEARCHED FOR:</b>				
<b>Zocor</b> (simvastatin) <a href="#">About this drug</a> Strength: <a href="#">10mg Tablet</a> Dosage: 1 Tablet, once a day <a href="#">Coverage rules may apply.</a>	<b>Retail</b> 30-days' supply	<b>\$24.66</b> for 30 days	<b>\$295.92</b> per year <a href="#">How much does my plan pay?</a>	
<b>LOWEST COST ALTERNATIVE</b>				
<b>simvastatin</b> (generic equivalent ⓘ)  <a href="#">View report &gt;&gt;</a> <a href="#">About this drug</a>	<b>Mail</b> 90-days' supply 	<b>\$10.00</b> for 90 days	<b>\$40.00</b> per year <a href="#">How much does my plan pay?</a>	SAVE <b>\$255.92</b> <a href="#">Why is this my lowest cost alternative?</a>

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Prescriptions & benefits

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1 Review

Zocor

See details

Medication

YOU SEARCHED

ZOCOR

(simvastatin)

[About this drug](#)

Strength: 1

Dosage: 1

[Coverage](#)

LOWEST COST

[simvastatin](#)

(generic equivalent)

**Consumer Reports  
BEST BUY DRUGS**

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[About this drug](#)

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By arrangement, you are viewing this summary through a Web site other than our own. Some drug price information has been removed because you have access to the prices you would pay for your medicines through the Web site you accessed this summary from.

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Treating Elevated Cholesterol and Heart Disease  
**The Statins**  
Comparing Effectiveness, Safety, and Price

**Our Recommendations**

**If you have high cholesterol** or are at risk of heart attack or stroke, your doctor may prescribe a "statin" – the most widely used type of cholesterol-lowering drug. There are six statins. Three are now available as less expensive generics – lovastatin, pravastatin and simvastatin. One new combination drug – Vytorin – combines simvastatin with another type of cholesterol-lowering drug.

To help you and your doctor choose the statin that is right for you, *Consumer Reports* has evaluated the drugs in this category based on their effectiveness, safety, and cost. This 2-page brief is a summary of an 18-page report you can access on the Internet at [www.CRBESTBUYDRUGS.org](http://www.CRBESTBUYDRUGS.org). You can also learn about other drugs we've analyzed on this free Web site. Our independent evaluations are based on scientific reviews conducted by the Oregon Health and Science University-based Drug Effectiveness Review Project. Grants from the Engelberg Foundation and National Library of Medicine helped fund *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs*.

Statins are highly effective and generally safe medicines. In people at risk for heart disease or who have heart disease, they substantially lower the chances of a heart attack, stroke, and death.

The statins differ in their ability to reduce cholesterol and there is stronger evidence for some when it comes to reducing your risk of heart attack or death from heart disease or stroke. The statins also vary widely in cost.

Taking the evidence for effectiveness, safety, and cost into account, we have chosen four statins as **Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs**:

- **Generic lovastatin** – if you need to lower "bad" (LDL) cholesterol by less than 30%

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at prices you can afford

Top choices for...


Heart disease  
Diabetes  
Insomnia  
Blood pressure  
Migraine  
Pain  
Depression  
Cholesterol  
Menopause  
ADHD  
& more

Ratings of  
**200+**  
top-selling  
medicines

SAVE  
**\$1,000**  
OR MORE  
THIS YEAR







# Oral Drugs For Type 2 Diabetes



Getting the Most  
Value for Your  
Healthcare Dollar



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**Cómo Tratar el Reflujo Ácido,  
la Acidez Estomacal  
y la Enfermedad por Reflujo  
Gastroesofágico (GERD)**



*¿Qué medicinas son  
las mejores?*

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# Changing from this model of provision of information:



“I won’t let arthritis pain keep me from teaching.”

**VIOXX PROVIDES 24-HOUR RELIEF OF ARTHRITIS PAIN AND STIFFNESS**

**FIND OUT IF VIOXX CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE**

The less pain you feel, the more everyday victories you can achieve. And VIOXX may help. VIOXX is a prescription medicine for the relief of arthritis pain, stiffness, and inflammation.

**ONE PILL FOR ALL-DAY, ALL-NIGHT RELIEF**

With VIOXX you can experience nights with less pain and mornings with less stiffness because just one little pill works for a full 24 hours.

**VIOXX RELIEVES ARTHRITIS PAIN AND INFLAMMATION**

VIOXX is used to reduce pain and inflammation—soreness and swelling.

**TAKE WITH OR WITHOUT FOOD**

You don’t have to worry about scheduling VIOXX around meals.

**ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT VIOXX AND IF A FREE SAMPLE IS RIGHT FOR YOU**

For a free information guide on VIOXX, call 1-800-MERCK-30 or visit [vioxx.com](http://vioxx.com).

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT VIOXX**

People with allergic reactions, such as asthma, to aspirin or other arthritis medicines should not take VIOXX. In rare cases, serious stomach problems, such as bleeding, can occur without warning.

Tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney disease, or a history of angina, heart attack, or a blocked artery in your heart. VIOXX cannot take the place of aspirin for the prevention of heart attack or stroke. VIOXX should not be used by women in late pregnancy.

In clinical studies, commonly reported side effects included upper respiratory infection, diarrhea, nausea, and high blood pressure. Report any unusual symptoms to your doctor.

Please see the Patient Product Information for VIOXX on the next page for additional information that should be discussed with your doctor.

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**VIOXX**<sup>®</sup>  
(rofecoxib)  
**FOR EVERYDAY VICTORIES**

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**The Non-Steroidal  
Anti-Inflammatory Drugs**  
Comparing Effectiveness, Safety, and Price

