

ABenefits Xtra

Your Health & Benefits Awareness resource published by the Human Resources Department at ABX Air, Inc.

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Town Hall Meetings are scheduled to take place during the weeks of Jan. 27 and Feb. 3.

Watch the Communications Centers and ABX TV for the exact meeting dates, times, and locations.

Online Self-Care Tools

How do you know when to seek the services of a doctor or hospital or when to try self-care? For example, do you know when a simple bee sting can be treated with an ice-pack and an over-the-counter pain reliever or when to seek emergency help?

The UHC web-site, www.myuhc.com, offers an on-line "Self-Care Tool." Based on medical information from Healthwise Knowledgebase, a leading on-line source of medical information, you can learn when to call your doctor, when to try a home remedy, and when to seek emergency care.

A symptom guide provides a quick way to determine the best course of action, based on the symptoms you are experiencing. The "snap-shot" shown below for a bee sting gives you an example of what the website offers.

(Please see Self-Care on page 2.)

Three Popular Drugs Go Generic

Recently three popular drugs used by ABX employees have gone generic or over-the-counter. The brand names of these drugs are Prilosec, Prozac, and Claritin. Each of these drugs costs our health plan in excess of \$100,000 a year.

Prilosec®

Prilosec® is a popular anti-acid medication used by many ABX employees and families. As a brand name drug, this medication was the third most costly drug in terms of volume and cost to our health plan and cost over \$114 for each 30-day supply. It is used to treat acid reflux, also known as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), a serious condition that afflicts many people. Also known as the original "purple pill," this medication is classified as a proton pump inhibitor and works by turning off cells in your stomach that produce excess acid.

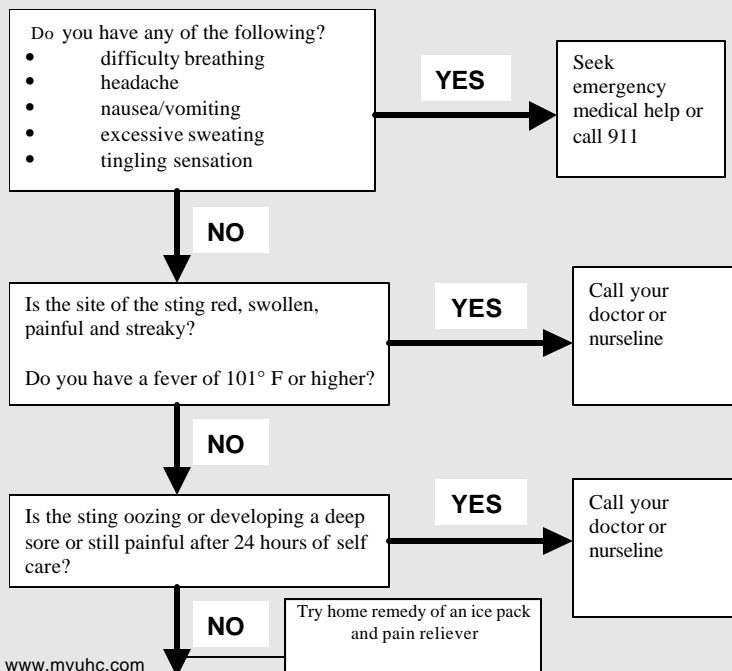
Prilosec is manufactured by the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca and has generated billions in revenue worldwide for the pharmaceutical company. The drug is the second best-selling drug of all time. Now a consortium of three generic drug manufacturers are selling a generic version of Prilosec, which is called *omeprazole*. Presently, the generic version is available only in the 20 mg size (the most popular dosage).

Since the patent has run out on Prilosec, AstraZeneca is heavily advertising on television and elsewhere to get people to switch to its new follow-on drug, Nexium®. This drug is very similar to Prilosec but is not available as a generic. If you are taking Nexium or Prilosec, you should consider talking to your doctor to see if you can use *omeprazole* instead. Even as a generic drug, *omeprazole* is still an expensive drug, but the cost is expected to come down over time.

Another popular proton pump inhibitor that is used to treat GERD is Prevacid®. This drug also turns off the

(Please see Go Generic on page 2.)

ABX Snapshot - Self-Care (Bee Sting)



Source: www.myuhc.com

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Questions &

Answers

Q. Are generic drugs as safe and effective as brand name drugs?

A. Yes, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), a generic drug must have the exact same active ingredients as a brand-name drug.

The generic manufacturer must conduct lab testing and studies on humans to prove the generic has the same effectiveness and side effects as the brand-name drug. According to Clay O'Dell of the Generic Pharmaceutical Association, a trade group that represents generic drug manufacturers, "You cannot put a generic drug on the market without proving to the FDA that it is absolutely equivalent."

Q. When should I call the Nurseline?

A. Call the line any time you are unsure about what to do for a medical situation. Registered Nurses are available to talk to you and provide health information 24/7 at no charge to you. **The number to call is (888) 609-5880.**

Another service at Nurseline is the Audio Health Information Library. You can reach the library by calling Nurseline, dialing 2, and then entering 185.

Another free service is "Live Nurse Chat." It's as easy as logging on to www.myuhc.com and clicking on the "Live Nurse Chat" link. You then can talk directly with a registered nurse from your own computer 24/7.

Online Self-Care Tools

(Continued from page 1)

We all should know how to treat such problems as vomiting, fever, earache, etc., especially if we have children in our care. Check out the "Self-Care Tools" on myuhc.com. It is a great source of medical knowledge.

Three Popular Drugs Go Generic

(Continued from page 1)

production of excess stomach acid using a different method. If you are taking this drug, you may want to discuss **omeprazole** with your doctor to see if it is an option for you.

Prozac®

Prozac® is a popular antidepressant manufactured by Eli Lilly. The generic drug name is **fluoxetine** and it has been available as a generic for about a year. Like the other pharmaceutical companies, Eli Lilly is heavily advertising on television and elsewhere to get people to switch to its new follow-on drug, Prozac® Weekly. Before it went generic, Prozac was costing our health plan over \$95 for every 30-day supply and was the second most costly drug in terms of volume and cost.

The main advantage of Prozac Weekly over Prozac is that it is prescribed to be taken once a week instead of daily. If you are using Prozac Weekly, you may want to talk to your doctor about using **fluoxetine** instead.

Claritin®

Claritin® was the first non-drowsy antihistamine medication used to treat common symptoms of seasonal allergies caused by pollens, molds, dust, and pet dander. Manufactured by Schering-Plough, Claritin recently was approved by the Food and Drug Administration to be sold without a prescription. It is now available over-the-counter at most drug and grocery stores.

Before it went over-the-counter, Claritin was the fifth most costly drug to our health plan in terms of volume and cost. A 30-day supply cost our health plan over \$56. Like the other pharmaceutical companies, Schering-Plough is heavily advertising on television and elsewhere to get people to switch to its new follow-on drug, Clarinex®. If you are using Clarinex, you should consider talking to your doctor about using the over-the-counter version of Claritin.

The information provided in this article is for information purposes only. You should always consult with your physician before taking or changing any medication.

Sources: American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists, United HealthCare, AstraZeneca, Eli Lilly, and Schering-Plough

Survey Update

As of the Jan. 13 deadline, Human Resources has received over 2,400 benefits surveys. We are currently compiling the data with a scanning software program and will be able to share the results with you shortly. Thanks to everyone who took the time to participate. Your viewpoint is important.

Nurseline

Testimonial

From an ABX employee who recently used Nurseline (888) 609-5880

Recently, late on a Sunday afternoon, my 5-year-old daughter started vomiting and experiencing diarrhea. She vomited about seven times in a two-hour span. As the afternoon went on, she seemed to be getting sicker and was not able to keep anything down.

It was now early evening, and my husband and I thought we may need to take her to the Urgent Care. We contacted our local Urgent Care Center, and it was closed for the evening. I debated on taking her to the emergency room as my daughter, luckily, had not experienced this type of illness before, and I was worried about her dehydrating.

I contacted the Nurseline for guidance; and after a conversation with a staff member, she advised me of the things to look for when a child is dehydrated and guided me on home remedies for my daughter.

She also provided me with other signs to look for, that if my daughter experienced, she would need immediate medical attention.

The phone call to Nurseline was what a mother needed to reassure me and remind me of what to look for when a child is experiencing such a condition. That one phone call saved me a trip to the emergency room, eased my mind, and helped me with better care for my daughter at home.

Thankfully, her condition turned out to be some type of 24-hour illness and she was better the next afternoon.