

Frequently Asked Questions About Drug Quantity Management

Q. What is drug quantity management?

A. Drug quantity management (DQM) is a program that makes sure that patients are using medications at doses that have been proven effective. It provides the medication you need for good health and the health of your family while making sure you receive them in the amount – or quantity – considered safe.

For example, your doctor might write a prescription for two 20mg pills once a day. If the medicine is available as a 40mg pill, you would need just one a day. Asking your doctor to prescribe the 40mg strength can save you and your plan money.

Drugs that aren't easily measured, like nose sprays and inhalers, are frequently included in DQM. U.S Food & Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines recommend the maximum quantities of these drugs that are proven to be safe and effective.

DQM also lets the pharmacist know if you ask for a refill when you should still have medicine left from the last time you filled the prescription.

Q. Who decides which drugs are included in the program?

A. Your prescription plan decides which medicines are covered.

To develop DQM recommendations, Express Scripts follows guidelines developed by the FDA. Your plan may consider these recommendations when determining coverage.

Q. Does this program deny me the medication I need?

A. DQM gives you access to the medicine you need in the amount that follows your plan's guidelines.

Q. Why couldn't I get the amount of medicine my doctor prescribed?

When you submit a prescription covered by DQM, your pharmacist should explain the reason. If you've asked for a refill too soon, ask your pharmacist when it will be time to get a refill.

If your doctor wrote a prescription for a quantity larger than your plan covers, ask your pharmacist to contact your doctor. They can discuss changing your prescription to a higher strength, if one is available.

If your doctor doesn't agree with the limit, he or she can call Express Scripts to request a prior authorization, which may allow you to receive the original amount and strength prescribed.

Q. What if I need a prescription filled immediately?

A. Express Scripts' prior authorization phone lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so a determination can be made right away. If the pharmacist cannot reach your doctor, talk with the pharmacist about filling your prescription as it's written, for the quantity your plan covers. Although you will pay your plan's copayment, the quantity you receive might not last a full month.

Q. What happens if my doctor's request is denied?

A. If your plan doesn't cover the quantity that was originally prescribed, ask your doctor about changing your prescription to a higher strength, if one is available. You'll receive the quantity of medicine you need for your plan's copayment. Or, you can get the original quantity by paying the full price.

If you want to file an appeal, ask your Human Resources (HR) administrator for more information, or contact Express Scripts at the number on the back of your member ID card. In addition, Express Scripts will send you a letter that includes the reason for the denial, your appeal rights and how to file an appeal.

Q. I submitted a prescription for home delivery, but I was told it is in a drug quantity management program. What happens now?

The Express Scripts Pharmacy will try to contact your doctor. If the pharmacists don'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.