

SPECIALTY MEDICATION

TIP SHEET

Specialty medication prescriptions — for medications like Enbrel®, Humira®, Kineret® and others — are handled differently than standard prescription refills. Some medications are more expensive than others, and require approval prior to dispensing. By being aware of this potential delay, you can ensure your child has access to the prescription medications they need, when they need them.

The goal of this tip sheet from the Division of Rheumatology at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) is to help patients and families get a clear understanding of the specialty medication process, the tools you need to order specialty medication refills and who to call if you have a concern.

Prescribing specialty medication

Your child has been prescribed a specialty medication. There is no industry standard definition of a specialty medication, but they are typically: high cost; used to treat complex, chronic conditions; and require special handling and administration.

They must be filled at a specialty pharmacy, not your local retail pharmacy.

Your child’s provider has sent your child’s prescription to CHOP’s Specialty Pharmacy to start the medication process.

Getting required labs and vaccinations

Before your child can begin taking the prescribed specialty medication, laboratory tests must be completed. These labs help your child’s provider ensure the specialty medication is safe and effective for them. Most children have labs completed at CHOP, LabCorp or Quest.

Please consult with your child’s pediatrician to ensure your child is up to date with their immunizations. Your child will not be able to receive some live vaccines while on certain medications.

- Labs
- Vaccinations

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Obtaining insurance approval

Once labs have been completed, our clinic team will start to work on insurance approval. Due to the high cost of these medications, insurance requires a special approval called a prior authorization. A prior authorization involves your child's provider explaining to the insurance company the reasons your child requires the medication. **This approval process can take days or weeks.** It is important to be patient!

If insurance initially denies your child's specialty medication, the next step is typically a Peer to Peer (P2P) review or an appeal. Your child's provider will work to complete these steps. If insurance continues to deny the medication after these steps have been completed, we recommend contacting your employer's benefits/HR department in order to request approval of the medication. Your insurance plan may mail documents to your home regarding the prior authorization. It is very important that you review these documents in case further action is required by you. For example, some plans require you to sign a consent form and mail or fax it back to the insurance company in order for the denial to be appealed. If you receive any communication from your child's insurance company, we encourage you to share it with us via MyCHOP or by calling **215-590-2547**.

Enrolling in copay assistance

If your family has commercial insurance, it is possible there will be a copay even after your child's insurance approves the medication. However, the manufacturers of many specialty medications offer copay assistance programs which can help lower costs. We encourage you to enroll in the manufacturer's copay assistance program by visiting the medication website.

- Enroll in copay assistance

Determining specialty pharmacy

Once your child's specialty medication has been approved by insurance, our clinic team will contact you via MyCHOP or telephone to let you know at which specialty pharmacy your child's insurance requires the medication to be filled. We'll also provide you with the pharmacy's contact information.

We encourage you to contact your child's insurance to determine the preferred specialty pharmacy. Examples of specialty pharmacies include:

- CHOP Specialty Pharmacy
- Accredo Specialty Pharmacy
- Optum Specialty Pharmacy
- CVS Specialty Pharmacy
- Walgreens Alliance Specialty Pharmacy

Delivery of specialty medications

When setting up delivery of your child's medication with the specialty pharmacy, be sure to ask about the cost of the medication and the copay you are responsible for. If you have a high copay, please contact our office to discuss additional options.

- Contact your specialty pharmacy to set up delivery.
- Set up delivery of medication.
- Keep track of approval dates and notify us a month prior to expiration.
- Keep track of refill dates.
- Get medications shipped when ever possible.

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Maintaining your child on a specialty medication

It is important to note that your child's medication is only approved for a certain timeframe; you will need to work with our office for any interval renewals. Please note your approval timeframe.

DO NOT make any changes to your child's medication schedule until you have insurance approval and access to the medication confirmed.

- Stay up to date on lab work. Most medications require labs at least every 6 months.
- Keep track of approval dates and notify us a month prior to expiration.
- Keep track of refill dates.
- Get medications shipped whenever possible.
- Contact our office with any change to your insurance.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact the Division of Rheumatology via **MyCHOP** or phone at **215-590-2547**.

CONTACT INFORMATION

CHOP Specialty Pharmacy

Open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
267-425-8888 (press 3, then 0 at prompts)

For non-urgent issues, use **MyCHOP** to contact the CHOP Specialty Pharmacy. A team member will get back to you shortly.

www.chop.edu/HCSF

CHOP Family Learning Center

215-590-6078

Located inside the Connelly Resource Center for Families (8th floor, Main Hospital), the FLC provides families with one-on-one instruction to help families learn the skills they need to care for many of their children's healthcare needs at home.

www.chop.edu/FLC

See our Rheumatology Patient Instructions at www.chop.edu/rheum-pi

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

RESOURCES

Copay relief and prescription assistance programs

A copay assistance card/program is essentially a coupon or discount program that makes a medication less expensive for your child or family. You can sign up for the program by contacting:

- The manufacturer's website of the medication your child is prescribed
- An independent copay card website like [GoodRx.com](https://www.GoodRx.com)
- Your specialty pharmacist to see if they can assist you or help determine financial assistance options

Download or get your discount card in the mail and show it at the pharmacy each time you go to fill your child's prescription. In some cases, you may have to submit your billing statement from your child's infusion and then be reimbursed. The pharmaceutical company covers some of your cost, or — in some cases — all of it.

Generally, anyone who has private health insurance (not Medicare or Medicaid) is **eligible** to enroll in a copay assistance program. In most cases, you **DO NOT** have to prove that paying your regular copay for the medication would present a financial hardship.

You're most likely to find a copay assistance program for expensive and new-to-the-market drugs or those that have been available for a while and their patent is expiring (and there's a cheaper, generic version available).

All families utilizing biologic medications should look at the drug company website to determine if there is a payment assistance program available. Please see some listed below and on the following page.

If you are still having trouble affording your child's medication, you can investigate these various resources or let your provider know so we can work with our social worker to ensure your child has the medication they need to feel better!

GoodRx

[GoodRx.com](https://www.GoodRx.com) • 855-268-2822

Patient Access Network Foundation

[PANFoundation.org](https://www.PANFoundation.org) • 866-316-7263

Assists patients who cannot access the treatments they need due to out-of-pocket healthcare costs, including deductibles, copayments, and coinsurance. Up to \$4,000 yearly in drug/copay assistance available. Patients can apply online or call the phone number above.

The Assistance Fund (TAF)

[TAFcares.org](https://www.TAFcares.org) • 855-845-3663 or 855-743-3593

This program offers multiple levels of financial assistance for prescription expenses. Assistance is allocated according to diagnosis. Check to see if your child's diagnosis is currently covered. If not, check back periodically to see if it has been added.

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Healthwell Foundation

[HealthWellFoundation.org](https://www.healthwellfoundation.org) • 800-675-8416

Addresses the needs of individuals who cannot afford their insurance copayments, premiums, coinsurance, or other out-of-pocket healthcare costs.

National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)

[RareDiseases.org](https://www.rarediseases.org) • 800-634-7207

Assists uninsured or underinsured individuals in securing lifesaving or life-sustaining medications.

Medicine Assistance Tool

[MedicineAssistanceTool.org](https://www.medicinassistance.com) • 571-350-8643

Offers a single point of access to more than 475 public and private patient assistance programs, including more than 150 programs offered by pharmaceutical companies. Includes assistance for the uninsured.

Patient Advocate Foundation Co-Pay Relief Program

[copays.org](https://www.copays.org) • 866-512-3861

Provides direct copayment assistance for pharmaceutical products to insured patients (including Medicare Part D beneficiaries) who qualify financially and medically.

Chronic Disease Fund (Good Days)

[MyGoodDays.org](https://www.mygooddays.org) • 877-968-7233

Patients must call monthly to see if funds are available. Funds are based off individual donations.

Drug Specific Financial Assistance Programs

- **BENLYSTA® (belimumab)**
[Benefits & Savings | BENLYSTA \(belimumab\)](#)
- **CIMZIA® (certolizumab pegol)**
[ORENCIA On Call™ Patient Support - Sign Up Today | ORENCIA® \(abatacept\)](#)
- **COSENTYX® (secukinumab)**
[Paying for COSENTYX | COSENTYX® \(secukinumab\)](#)
- **ENBREL® (etanercept)**
[Financial Support | Enbrel® \(etanercept\)](#)
- **HUMIRA® (adalimumab)**
[HUMIRA® \(adalimumab\) - Find my medicine - Patient Assistance - Patients | AbbVie](#)
- **KINERET® (anakinra)**
[KINERET® \(anakinra\) Official HCP Website | Financial Support \(kineretrhcp.com\)](#)
- **OLUMIANT® (baricitinib)**
[Savings | Olumiant® \(baricitinib\)](#)
- **ORENCIA® (abatacept)**
[ORENCIA On Call™ Patient Support - Sign Up Today | ORENCIA® \(abatacept\)](#)
- **OTEZLA® (apremilast)**
[SupportPlus™ | Otezla® \(apremilast\)](#)
- **RINVOQ® (upadacitinib)**
[RINVOQ® \(upadacitinib\) Cost](#)
- **RITUXAN® (rituximab)**
[RA | Financial Assistance, Copay & Cost | RITUXAN® \(rituximab\)](#)
- **SIMPONI ARIA® (golimumab)**
[Paying for SIMPONI® - Cost Support | Janssen CarePath](#)
- **STELARA® (ustekinumab)**
[Janssen CarePath for STELARA® \(ustekinumab\) \(stelarainfo.com\)](#)
- **TALTZ® (ixekizumab)**
[Request & Activate Savings Card | Taltz® \(ixekizumab\)](#)
- **TOCILIZUMAB® (actemra)**
[RA Patient Financial Support | ACTEMRA® \(tocilizumab\) \(actemrahcp.com\)](#)
- **XELJANZ XR® (tofacitinib)**
[Co-Pay Savings Card | XELJANZ® \(tofacitinib\) | Safety Info](#)