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13 ways to save big at the drugstore

Learn insider tricks to save big bucks and find the best deals at drugstores.



Be savings savvy

Whether you're scouting for toiletries, cosmetics, cleaning products or milk, we'll show you how to save \$50 to \$100 per week on staples at the drugstore and reel in rock-bottom prices for your family's pharmacy needs.



Step 1: Pick your program

Focus on one store when you begin, because each chain has different rules, and it might be hard to keep them all straight at first. Sign up before you shop, and be sure to research the rewards programs for [CVS](#), [Rite Aid](#) and [Walgreens](#) to find out how each program works and how to redeem your rewards.

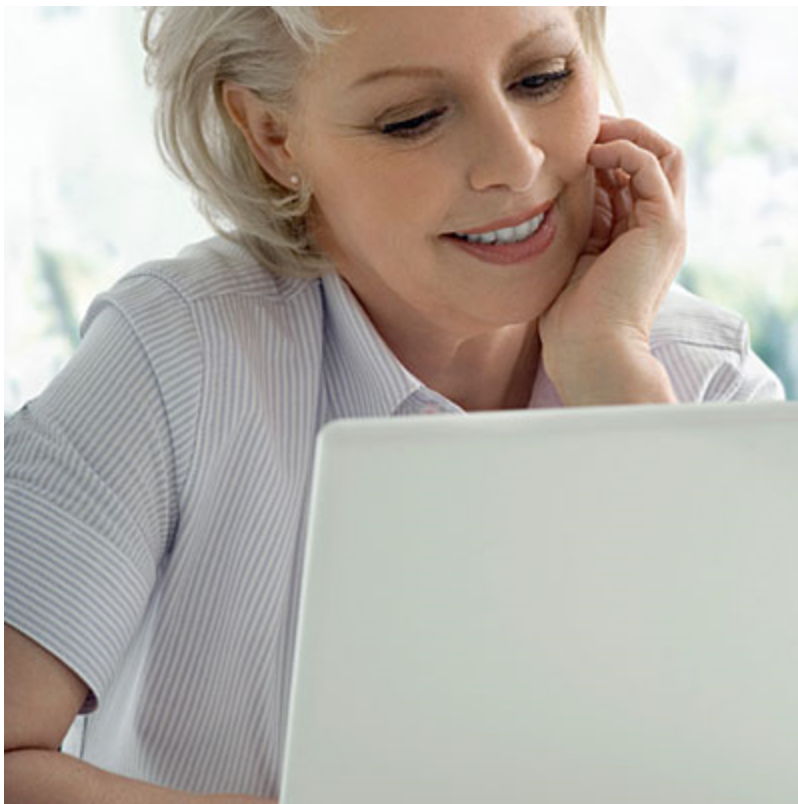
TIP: Sign up for e-mail updates. Register with the chain to receive additional promotions, like \$5 off a \$25 purchase, by e-mail. Such deals can save you a bundle when combined with other discounts.

Step 2: Make a list

List items you plan to buy at the store, even those you normally get at the supermarket, so you know what coupons to look for.

TIP: Start collecting coupons for the products on your list. CVS, Rite Aid and Walgreens accept manufacturers' along with their own store-issued coupons, which are located in fliers. Get more offers on the stores' websites. Build a sizeable stash of coupons so you can stock up during a sale for list items.





Step 3: Find frugal blogs

Look for websites that do the hard work of matching sales with loyalty programs and coupons for the best deal. To get started, bookmark some of our favorites in your browser. With their help, your preparation time should be 30 minutes or less a week.

For CVS, check out iheartcv.com or thethrifty mama.com

For Rite Aid, try iheartriteaid.com or forthemommas.com

For Walgreens, go to iheartwags.com or commonsensewithmoney.com



Step 4: Design a game plan

After checking the fliers and blogs, make a list of the coupons you plan to use and the transactions you want to make, combining as many different discounts as you can. It may sound cumbersome, but planning ahead saves a lot of time at the store.

TIP: Learn when your store's rewards expire and shop accordingly to avoid missing out. If nothing you want to purchase goes on sale in that period, redeem your rewards for items you can always use, such as milk, eggs or cereal.



Step 5: Organize your materials

Gather your coupons, the scenarios you've written up and the store circular. Keep your things in order by storing them in a folder or binder that you can carry to the store.

Easily organize your coupons (and save more money) with our easy tips.



Step 6: Shop sales

Sometimes, this means buying what you don't need. It sounds counterintuitive, but you can make money with this strategy. Let's say you've got toothpaste at home but CVS has some on sale for \$3, and you get \$2 in Extra Bucks upon purchase. You clipped a manufacturer's coupon for \$1.50 off. Pay \$1.50 for the toothpaste and get \$2 in Extra Bucks. You come out 50 cents ahead and don't have to buy toothpaste for a while.



Step 7: Be prepared at the register

Submitting your coupons in the correct order saves you money. Here's how to do it:

Rite Aid: If you have a coupon for money off your entire offer, present that to the cashier first, then hand over any other store and manufacturers' coupons for specific items.

CVS: Scan your ExtraCare card first to ensure you get Extra Bucks. Give money-off coupons next (such as \$3 off a \$20 purchase), then other store coupons, manufacturers' coupons and, lastly, Extra Bucks.

Walgreens: Even diehard clippers do not agree on the best order to hand over coupons at Walgreens. Your best bet is to try different combinations until you find the one that works at your store.



Step 8: Have a back-up plan

Ever walk down the aisle and find that the item you want to purchase is out of stock? Ask the manager for a rain check. At CVS and some other drugstores, you can get a slip of paper that entitles you to both the sale price and your rewards when a product has been restocked. Ask your local store's supervisor for their rain check policy.



Drugstore Savings Tips

Make a small investment. When you first sign up for the program, spend \$5 to \$15 on products that are featured in the weekly sales circular. You can use the rewards you generate on your next visit. This strategy is known as rolling your rewards—you're banking them to redeem in the future.

Handle a difficult cashier. Bring the store's coupon policy in case a discount is refused. (For the CVS policy, e-mail customercare@cv.com; you can find Rite Aid's at iheartriteaid.com; Walgreens coupon acceptance varies by store, so inquire with [your location's](#) manager.) If the manager still denies the discount, stay calm—being rude won't seal the deal.

<http://www.allyou.com/budget-home/money-shopping/shopping-rewards-00411000068635/>

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