



Our Recommendations

A man's prostate becomes larger as he ages, a condition known as benign prostatic hypertrophy, or BPH. It's usually not a serious or life-threatening condition, but it can cause problems with urinating, primarily in men age 50 and older. Often, lifestyle changes can be enough to provide relief, but if those don't work, then medications may be necessary.

To help you and your doctor choose the right BPH medicine if you need one, *Consumers Reports Best Buy Drugs* has evaluated the drugs in this category based on their effectiveness, safety, and cost. This 2-page brief is a summary of a 16-page report you can access at ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs. You can also learn about other drugs we've analyzed on this free Web site.

DO YOU NEED A BPH DRUG?

Many men with BPH will either have no symptoms or symptoms that are mild and not that bothersome. But for millions of others, the urinary problems caused by BPH can interfere with their quality of life. Some men with BPH, for example, feel the urge to get up several times throughout the night to urinate, which can interrupt their sleep and leave them tired and groggy.

If you have urinary problems due to BPH, lifestyle changes can often provide relief and should be tried before medication. (See box below for tips.)

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 the National Library of Medicine help fund Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs. These materials were made possible by a grant from the state Attorney General Consumer and Prescriber Education Grant Program, which is funded by the multi-state settlement of consumer fraud claims regarding the marketing of the prescription drug Neurontin (gabapentin).

You should see a doctor if you have urinary problems. The symptoms of BPH can be similar to the symptoms of prostate cancer, so it's important to get an accurate diagnosis. You should also contact your doctor immediately if you have a fever or chills, pain in your back, side or abdomen, cloudy or bloody urine, or pain when urinating. Those could be signs of serious complications that require medical attention.

Two classes of drugs are commonly used to treat prostate enlargement: alpha-blockers and 5-alpha-reductase inhibitors. Alpha-blockers are generally used first because they act fast, relieving urination problems in a matter of days or weeks, while reductase inhibitors can take several months to provide relief. Sometimes the two types of drugs are used in combination.

If you and your doctor decide that a drug is appropriate for your condition, we recommend the alpha-blocker doxazosin as your first option. We picked it as our *Best Buy* because it has a long track record of being both safe and effective. It's also available as an inexpensive generic drug, costing \$12 or less for a month's supply. The savings would be significant vs. taking one of the costly brand-name alpha-blockers, which can run more than \$100 per month.

If doxazosin doesn't work for you, you might try another alpha-blocker, terazosin. Or you and your doctor might want to consider adding a reductase inhibitor to your regimen. In that case, we recommend finasteride. It is the only reductase inhibitor available as a generic, so it costs significantly less than a brand-name drug. In addition, the combination of finasteride and doxazosin has been proven to delay the progression of BPH symptoms.

This information was updated in March 2010.

Lifestyle changes that can ease symptoms of BPH:

- Urinate when you first feel the urge; don't wait.
- Do not rush urination. Take your time and relax before, during, and after to give your bladder extra time to empty if the stream is slow or intermittent.
- Practice "double-voiding": Urinate as much as possible, relax for a moment, and then go again.
- Urinate before car trips, meetings, or movies.
- Spread fluid intake throughout the day and reduce it before bedtime, especially coffee, tea, or other caffeinated beverages. Do not avoid fluid intake to reduce the need to urinate. That can cause dehydration.
- Drink alcohol and caffeine in moderation.
- Avoid decongestant and antihistamine medicines when possible.
- If you take a diuretic (a type of high blood pressure pill), ask your doctor if you can take a lower dose or a different drug.
- If you have diabetes, controlling blood sugar can reduce frequent urination.

BPH Drugs - Cost Comparison

Generic Name, Form, and Dose	Brand name ¹	Number of pills per day ²	Average monthly cost ³
Alpha-blockers			
Alfuzosin 10 mg sustained-release tablet	Uroxatral	One	\$141
CR BEST BUY Doxazosin 1 mg tablet	Generic	One	\$12
Doxazosin 1 mg tablet	Cardura	One	\$61
CR BEST BUY Doxazosin 2 mg tablet	Generic	One	\$10
Doxazosin 2 mg tablet	Cardura	One	\$66
CR BEST BUY Doxazosin 4 mg tablet	Generic	One	\$10
Doxazosin 4 mg tablet	Cardura	One	\$63
CR BEST BUY Doxazosin 8 mg tablet	Generic	One	\$10
Doxazosin 8 mg tablet	Cardura	One	\$63
Doxazosin 4 mg sustained-release tablet	Cardura XL	One	\$67
Doxazosin 8 mg sustained-release tablet	Cardura XL	One	\$69
Prazosin 1 mg capsule	Generic	Two to Three	\$14-\$21
Prazosin 1 mg capsule	Minipress	Two to Three	\$60-\$90
Prazosin 2 mg capsule	Generic	Two to Three	\$16-\$24
Prazosin 2 mg capsule	Minipress	Two to Three	\$76-\$114
Prazosin 5 mg capsule	Generic	Two to Three	\$20-\$30
Prazosin 5 mg capsule	Minipress	Two to Three	\$156-\$234
Silodosin 4 mg capsule	Rapaflo	One	\$136
Silodosin 8 mg capsule	Rapaflo	One	\$138
Tamsulosin 0.4 mg continuous delivery capsule	Generic	One to Two	Price not available
Tamsulosin 0.4 mg continuous delivery capsule	Flomax	One to Two	\$158-\$316
Terazosin 1 mg capsule	Generic	One	\$20
Terazosin 2 mg capsule	Generic	One	\$19
Terazosin 2 mg capsule	Hytrin	One	\$118
Terazosin 5 mg capsule	Generic	One	\$20
Terazosin 5 mg capsule	Hytrin	One	\$81
Terazosin 10 mg capsule	Generic	One	\$20
Terazosin 10 mg capsule	Hytrin	One	\$76
5-alpha-reductase inhibitors			
Dutasteride 0.5 mg capsule	Avodart	One	\$137
Finasteride 5 mg tablet	Generic	One	\$70
Finasteride 5 mg tablet	Proscar	One	\$117

1. Generic indicates it's the generic version of the drug.

2. As typically prescribed.

3. Prices reflect nationwide retail average for January 2010, rounded to the nearest dollar. Information derived by *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs* from data provided by Wolters Kluwer Health, Pharmaceutical Audit Suite®. Wolters Kluwer Health is not involved in our analysis or recommendations.

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