What is a qualified medical expense now?

COVID-19 relief legislation expands how you can use money from HSAs, FSAs, and HRAs.

The recent COVID-19 relief legislation included important changes for users of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), health care flexible spending accounts (health care FSAs), and health reimbursements accounts (HRAs). Specifically, it made two additions to what the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will consider qualified medical expenses:

- Over-the-counter medications, including antacids, pain relievers, and treatments for cold, flu, and allergy symptoms, *without a prescription from a doctor.*
- Menstrual care products, including tampons, pads, liners, cups, sponges, or similar products.

Respirators and face masks are not currently listed as qualified medical expenses, so it will be up to the IRS to approve reimbursement for these items. If your doctor suggests you need a respirator (to reduce your own exposure) or a face mask (to reduce exposure to others if you are sick), you can ask for a Letter of Medical Necessity to support your case with the IRS, provided you satisfy all other IRS requirements.

As always, qualified medical expenses include co-pays and co-insurance; doctor visits and lab tests; prescriptions; hospital services; surgery; and therapy (physical and emotional).
Below are common examples of over-the-counter (OTC) medications and other medical supplies, none of which require a prescription to be considered qualified medical expenses.

**Examples of OTC medications**

- Antacids
- Acne medicine
- Aids for indigestion
- Allergy medicine
- Anti-diarrheal medicine
- Cold and flu medicine
- Laxatives or stool softeners
- Lice treatments
- Motion sickness medicines
- Ointments for cuts, burns or rashes
- Pain relievers

**Other medical supplies**

- Crutches, braces & supports
- Contact lenses
- Dentures & denture adhesives
- Bandages, including Band-Aids®, elastic bandages and wraps
- Insulin & blood sugar test kits
- Eyeglasses
- Wheelchair cushions

For a more complete list of qualified medical expenses, see [IRS Publication 502](https://www.irs.gov/publications/p502.html).

The information provided herein is general in nature. The list provided here is not exhaustive and is for illustrative purposes only, and other IRS requirements may need to be satisfied for approval of a specific expense. It is not intended, nor should it be construed, as legal or tax advice.