



Drugstore Price Differences Mean **Some Shoppers are Paying More.**

Chain drugstores are convenient, but are their prices fair and transparent? While savvy consumers know comparison shopping between physical retailers and online outlets is essential to saving money, new research reveals that comparing in-store prices at different locations of the same chain is just as important. With drugstores expanding their offerings and vying for more of our dollars, Change to Win Retail Initiatives in partnership with the National Consumers League surveyed 110 Walgreens and CVS locations throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area to see how consistent in-store pricing was within each chain and how shoppers can get the best deals.

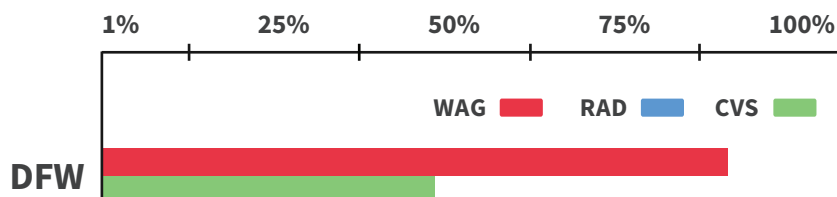
The survey uncovered that Walgreens locations in the region were much more likely to charge different prices for the same item than CVS. It also found **Walgreens customers could be overpaying as much as 52 percent for common drugstore items based on which Walgreens location they choose.**

Researchers checked the stores for the same basket of 25 items that included over-the-counter medicines, baby products, grocery items, beauty products and nutritional supplements.

Walgreens Customers More Likely to Overpay

- **Same neighborhood, different prices at Walgreens.** Prices varied widely between Walgreens stores that were close together. For example, two stores just three and a half miles from each had a price difference of \$2.20—or 26 percent—for CoverGirl lipstick.
- **Walgreens had the biggest price differences between its stores.** Across the area, Walgreens had two times the number of items with a 20 percent or greater price range than CVS. Eighty-four percent of the surveyed items had a price range of a dollar or more at Walgreens. Only 48 percent did at CVS.
- **Price differences at Walgreens often meant consumers were paying more.** Dallas-Fort Worth shoppers could end up paying a total of \$47.12 more for the items in the survey if they purchased them at the most expensive price. This is nearly than twice the price difference at CVS. Walgreens also sold significantly more items than CVS with a price at least 10 percent higher than the market's best.

Percentage of Products Priced at Least 10% Higher than Market Lowest



Tips for Getting the Best Price

In addition to searching for sales and coupons, here are some tips for getting the best price at your drugstore:

- **Ask about price matching.** While none of the chains will match their online prices at brick-and-mortar locations, it is at the manager's discretion to match prices from other stores in the area.
- **Watch your wallet.** Shoppers can't count on the price on the shelf to be the best the chain offers—especially at Walgreens. Keep track of the prices of your drugstore staples and shop around to find the best deals.
- **Remember loyalty can pay.** Loyalty card bonuses and rewards can offset some price differences. Rite Aid's Wellness+ gives storewide discounts after shoppers reach a certain program status. CVS's ExtraCare gives points for nearly every purchase. At Walgreens, Balance Rewards only gives points for selected items.

Shoppers often decide on drugstore locations based on convenience, and there is an expectation that pricing across a chain for the same item in the same market is consistent and transparent. For Rite Aid and CVS, this is largely true. Walgreens does not offer shoppers this assurance and consumers may wish to know why.

The drugstore locations in this study were chosen by random selection. In each market, researchers visited a statistically significant number of stores. The 25 products in the survey were drawn from major front-end categories in drugstores. They were CoverGirl Lip Perfection Lipstick, Neutrogena Foaming Scrub, Dial Soap, Dove Invisible Solid Deodorant, Axe Apollo Anti-Perspirant Deodorant, Just for Men Hair Coloring, Always Maxi Pads Overnight, Tampax Tampons Radiant, First Response Digital Pregnancy Test, LifeStyles SKYN Original Condoms, Huggies "Little Movers" Diapers, Huggies Baby Wipes, Listerine Mouthwash, Colgate Total Whitening Paste, Scott Toilet Paper, Neosporin Skin Ointment, Zyrtec, Claritin 24 hr, NyQuil Cold & Flu Relief - LiquiCaps, Advil Ibuprofen Pain relief - Coated Caplets, Benadryl Children's Allergy medication, Nature's Bounty Sublingual Liquid Super B-Complex, Centrum Silver Multivitamins for Adults 50+ Silver, Folgers Coffee, Special Roast, Tropicana Pure Premium Orange Juice.