



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

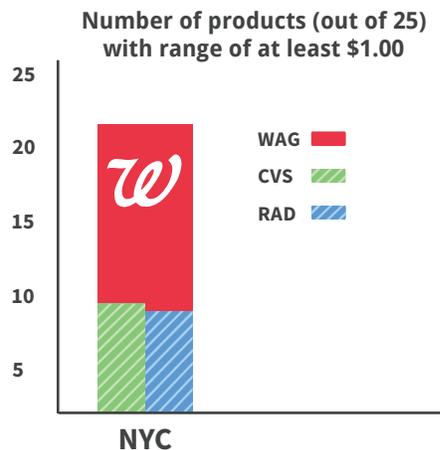
Chain drugstores are convenient, but are their prices fair and transparent? While savvy consumers know comparison shopping between physical retailers and online outlets is essential to saving money, new research reveals that comparing in-store prices at different locations of the same chain is just as 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 144 CVS, Rite Aid and Walgreens locations throughout Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens to see how consistent in-store pricing within each chain and how shoppers could get the best deals.

The survey uncovered that Walgreens locations in the city were nearly two-and-a-half times more likely to charge different prices for the same item than Rite Aid and more than one-and-a-half times more likely than CVS. It also found **Walgreens customers could be overpaying as much as 55 percent for common drugstore items based on the store 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.

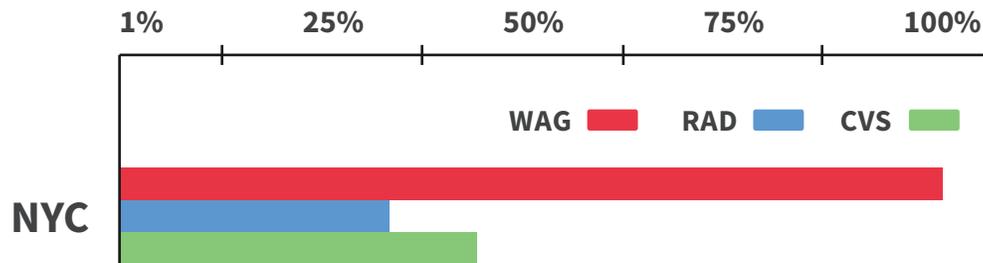
Walgreens Customers More Likely to Overpay

- **Same neighborhood, different prices at Walgreens.** Prices varied widely not only between boroughs but within them as well. In Manhattan, consumers could pay \$4.50 more for a package of Claritin—a nearly 40 percent difference—if they picked the wrong midtown location. A Walgreens shopper in Queens could save \$1—or 12 percent—on Children’s Benadryl by walking three minutes to another Walgreens store.
- **Walgreens had the biggest price differences between its stores.** Across the city, Walgreens had more than eight times the number of products with a 20 percent or greater price range than CVS. Rite Aid had no products with that big of a gap. Walgreens also had more than twice the number of products with a price range over \$1 than both competitors.



- **Price differences at Walgreens often meant consumers were paying more.** New York City shoppers could end up paying a total \$56.30 more the items in the survey if shop among the market’s more expensive Walgreens locations. This is more than twice the price difference at CVS and nearly four times the price range at Rite Aid. Walgreens also had a significantly higher rate of items selling for at least 10 percent higher than the market’s lowest price.

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.
- **Avoid Walgreens “flagship” stores.** Walgreens management has said that flagship stores are more expensive, and the survey found proof of that. The basket of items in the survey cost nearly 20 percent more—or almost \$38 extra—at a flagship store in New York than it typically did at other Walgreens in the city.

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.