Effective January 1, 2006 University of Michigan Prescription Drug Plan participants may participate in a voluntary pill-splitting program. The program is supported by recent research conducted at the University of Michigan College of Pharmacy. The research showed that U-M plan participants who pill split “statin” (cholesterol-lowering) medications did so in a safe manner, and that pill splitting did not have an adverse effect on health or medical status. Both members and the U-M Prescription Drug Plan experienced savings when the members split pills.

How does pill splitting work?
Cutting one double-strength tablet in half yields two half tablets. Each half tablet contains your regular dose of medication. For example, if you are taking one tablet daily of simvastatin 20mg, you will split simvastatin 40mg and take one half tablet daily. By purchasing only half the number of pills in twice the dosage, the total drug cost is reduced. The savings from pill splitting are shared with members and help reduce future drug plan premiums for everyone.

Which drugs can be pill split?
Currently, the pill-splitting option at U-M is only for generic atorvastatin, lovastatin, pravastatin, simvastatin, and brand Crestor which are cholesterol-lowering statins.

How much money will I save?
Members who split pills will receive a 50% reduction in their co-pays. In addition, the University will provide one pill-splitter device per year at no cost through the pharmacy where the medication is dispensed. Here is an example of a typical member’s cost savings for pill splitting:
• Without pill splitting: Member gets a 30-day supply of simvastatin and pays a $5 co-pay or $60 per year.
• With pill splitting: Member cost is reduced to a $2.50 co-pay or $30 per year, for a savings of $30 annually.

Is pill splitting safe?
Pill splitting is not appropriate for every type of medication. For the statin medications included in this program, pill splitting is easy, safe, and can be done in just a few minutes.

Use only an approved pill splitter dispensed by your pharmacy. We do not recommend that you pill split with a knife, razor blade or any other object.

How much will a pill splitter cost?
Typically the retail price of a pill splitter is $3.00 to $6.00. If generic atorvastatin, lovastatin, pravastatin, simvastatin, or brand Crestor is being dispensed, the U-M Prescription Drug Plan will pay for one pill-splitting device per year. Ask your retail pharmacist to simply submit a claim for payment to MedImpact.
Is pill splitting right for me?

• Do you want to save on out-of-pocket cost for your medications?
• Are you taking **generic atorvastatin, lovastatin, pravastatin, simvastatin, or brand Crestor**?
• Does your physician agree and is he or she willing to write you a new prescription (see details below)?

(Note: You should not pill split if you do not feel you have the manual dexterity or vision to safely use a pill splitting device.)

Warning: Do not make any changes in your medications or the way you take your medications without first consulting your doctor.

Before you participate, consider the following:

If you feel you are unable or unsure about pill splitting, think about asking a friend or relative for assistance. This is especially important if you have vision problems or dexterity difficulty due to arthritis or another medical condition. If you have any questions concerning your ability to safely and effectively split pills, please talk with your physician.

Even tablets with scores, those small grooves down the center, do not always split evenly. That is acceptable. In fact, it is common that one half pill is slightly larger than the other, and that is no problem. Statin medications are commonly taken over a lifetime and small changes in dosage from day to day will not impact the overall therapy.

Follow These Steps to Participate

→1. Discuss the program with your physician at your next regularly scheduled appointment.

→2. Get a new prescription from your doctor.

If you want to participate in the **voluntary** pill-splitting program, your doctor must write a new prescription for:

- **A.** half the usual supply of medications (for example, 15 pills for 30 days, or 45 pills for 90 days)
- **B.** and twice the usual dosage (for example 10mg doubled to 20mg)
- **C.** patient instructions should include: “take one-half tablet daily”
- **D.** if your prescription is for a mail order supply then your physician needs to write a prescription to “dispense one pill splitter”

If you currently take 10mg of simvastatin, one tablet daily, for 30 days (a total of 30 tablets) your new prescription will need to be written as: 20mg of simvastatin, one-half tablet daily, and 15 tablets in total for a 30-day period. The new tablets will be split in half, and one half of a tablet will be taken each day. This will ensure that you receive the same prescribed dose per day as you have in the past.

→3. Fill your new prescription at the network pharmacy of your choice.

Ask your retail pharmacist to also dispense a pill splitter with your first pill-splitting prescription to receive the device at no cost. A pill splitter through mail order does require a prescription from your physician.

If you prefer 90-day supplies received through mail order, send your new prescription to the Novixus Mail Service. Your co-pay for pill splitting medications will be 50% of the normal charge.
How to Split Your Pills

Below are step-by-step instructions with photographs that show how to split your pills. If you have additional questions, please discuss them with your pharmacist or physician.

These are common types of pill splitters. In the U-M research study members reported that using a tablet cutter that has a crystal clear plastic body was the preferred type of pill splitter. Here are samples of tablet cutters commonly found in retail pharmacies, note the solid blue cutter on the left side of the photograph is not the preferred pill splitter.

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**Step 1 - Open the Pill Splitter**

Place the pill splitter on a flat surface to prevent tipping. Open the cover of the pill splitter. You should be able to see the area marked for the pill.

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**Step 2 - Put the Pill in the Pill Splitter**

Pour your pills into a small dry bowl or cup. Place each pill in the pill area. It is important to place the pill correctly so it will split into two halves.

- atorvastatin
- pravastatin
- simvastatin
Step 3 – Cut the Pill in Half

With the pill correctly placed in the pill splitter, stabilize and secure the pill splitter with one hand and then place one finger on the bottom portion of the pill splitter to hold it steady. With the other hand, press the top down slowly but firmly on the pill to cut it.

Step 4 – Remove the Split Pill

Remove your split pills and put them back in your clean and dry prescription bottle. Half a pill is taken one day, the other half is saved for the next day. The split pill may not be exact, this is no problem. Just take one-half of the pill and save the other half for the next day.

Please store your pills safely in a cool, dry place, away from the reach of children and pets.