

# Americans Say They Are Suffering as Drug Costs Continue to Rise

## Consumers in our survey resort to rationing medication and other risky steps to deal with rising drug costs

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Every month Jodi Smith has to make some tough choices about which prescription drugs she can afford and which she and her family will have to do without.

The 42-year-old teacher from eastern Michigan and her daughter need pricey asthma inhalers and allergy drugs. But if they both renewed their prescriptions, “we could spend anywhere between \$800 and \$1,200,” Smith says. And that would quickly break the budget, sending the family spiraling into debt.

So Smith says she has to be “strategic” in how she manages her expenses: “At this time, I am skipping doses to try to pay other bills like our mortgage.”

Making these kinds of difficult and, at times, potentially harmful choices, has become all too common, according to a new nationally representative Consumer Reports survey of 1,200 adults who currently take prescription medications. **In the past year, 22 percent of them—which comes to an estimated 27 million Americans—experienced a price hike for one or more of their medications. About a third of those people said they paid at least \$50 per month extra for one or more prescriptions.**

More on Drug Costs

**When drug costs rise, consumers often resort to desperate measures, our survey suggests. People who experienced price spikes in their meds were more likely to say that, like Smith, they rationed their own meds by not taking them as often as they should. They were also more likely to split their pills without first talking with a doctor, or to use expired medication. And a shocking number—about 20 percent—said they didn’t fill their prescription at all.**

### As Drug Prices Rise, Quality of Life Goes Down

The high cost of drugs is forcing many Americans to cut back on groceries, delay retirement, or ration their own healthcare in potentially dangerous ways, a CR survey of nearly 1,200 American adults currently taking prescription drugs has found.

# Household Changes

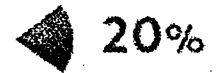
## Increased Drug Cost

## No Increased Drug Cost

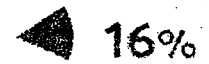
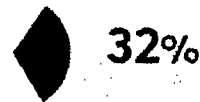
Experienced a cost increase in at least one drug in the last 12 months

Did not experience a drug cost increase in the last 12 months

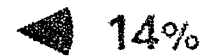
Spent less on entertainment and dining out



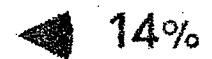
Spent less on groceries



Used credit card more often



Spent less on family



Postponed paying other bills



Postponed retirement to maintain coverage



Took a second job

