

## What medications are included in the step therapy program?

Check with your plan sponsor or call the customer service number on the back of your ID card to learn which drugs are included in your group's step therapy program.\* Below are examples of drug categories for which a step therapy program may exist.

### Sample Drug Categories Included in Step Therapy Programs

The psoriasis step therapy program is designed to encourage the use of first line medications before Amevive, Enbrel or Raptiva are prescribed.

The intent of the rheumatoid arthritis step therapy program is to encourage the use of methotrexate prior to or along with the use of Enbrel, Humira and Kineret.

*\*Additional categories may be added and the programs may change periodically.*

The **step therapy program** encourages **safe** and **cost-effective** medication use.

Encouraging safe and cost-effective medication use, by using tools such as step therapy, helps manage the rising cost of prescription drugs – and to control costs for everyone.

If you have questions about the step therapy program, call the customer service number on the back of your ID card.



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Illinois**



## Step Therapy Program

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20942.1106



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Illinois**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois and your plan sponsor are working together to find ways to manage the rising costs of prescription drugs. Your benefit plan uses tools, such as step therapy, that can help control costs for everyone.

### What is step therapy?

The step therapy program encourages the safe and cost-effective use of medication. Under this program, a “step” approach is required to receive coverage for certain high-cost medications. This means that to receive coverage you may need to first try a proven, cost-effective medication before progressing to a more costly treatment, if necessary. As always, treatment decisions rest solely with you and your doctor.

Work with your  
doctor to determine  
which medication  
options are  
best for you.

### Don't more expensive drugs work better?

Not necessarily. A higher cost does not automatically mean a drug is better. For example, a brand drug may have a less-expensive generic or brand alternative that might be an option for you. Generic and brand drugs must meet the same standards set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for safety and effectiveness. Work with your doctor to determine which medication options are best for you.

### How does the program work?

The step therapy program requires that you have a prescription history for a “first line” medication before your benefit plan will cover a “second line” drug.

- A **first line drug** is recognized as safe and effective in treating a specific medical condition, as well as a cost-effective treatment.
- A **second line drug** is a less preferred or potentially more costly treatment option.

**Step 1:** When possible, your doctor should prescribe a first line medication appropriate for your condition.

**Step 2:** If your doctor determines that a first line drug is not appropriate for you or is not effective in treating your condition, your prescription drug benefit will cover a second line drug when certain criteria are met.

### What should I do if I take a drug that is part of the step therapy program?

If you are already taking a medication that is included in the step therapy program when the program becomes part of your prescription drug benefit, your physician will need to write you a prescription for a first line medication or submit a prior authorization request for your current prescription before you can continue to receive coverage for the drug.

