

SNAP* : The Medical Expense Deduction

*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps

What is the Medical Expense Deduction?

The medical expense deduction is a tool that allows individuals who are age 60 or over, or disabled to subtract certain medical expenses from their gross income to calculate their net income. A lower calculated net income will result in a higher SNAP benefit level.

The Medical Expense Deduction is important because it can substantially increase monthly SNAP benefits.

Am I eligible to use the Medical Expense Deduction?

You may use the medical expense deduction if:

- You are age 60 or older, or disabled; and
- You have monthly medical expenses greater than \$35 that are not reimbursed by anyone

How is the Medical Expense Deduction applied?

The use of the medical expense deduction depends on your monthly medical costs:

- If your monthly medical expenses are \$35 or less, you cannot claim the deduction
- If your monthly medical expenses are above \$35, you will receive a standard medical deduction of \$140
- If your monthly medical expenses are above \$175, you can claim your actual medical costs instead of the \$140 standard deduction

A SNAP household only needs to prove \$35.01 of medical costs to use the medical expense deduction

For More Information, contact Virginia Hunger Solutions:

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Am I required to verify my medical expenses?

Yes. You must verify that elderly or disabled household members have more than \$35 in unreimbursed monthly medical expenses. Examples of verification documents can include:

- Pharmacy print outs of prescription drug costs and dates
- Receipts for transportation to and/or from medical appointments (including bus fare)
- Receipts for over-the-counter medications or health supplies that were recommended by a licensed health care practitioner
- Any other paperwork that shows medical expenses incurred by an elder/disabled member of the SNAP household

What kinds of medical expenses can be deducted?

Examples of expenses that can be deducted include:

- Medical and dental care
- Hospitalization or outpatient treatment, nursing care, and nursing home care
- Prescription drugs and over-the-counter medication approved by a licensed practitioner
- Health and hospitalization insurance policy premiums
- Costs of dentures, hearing aids, and prosthetics
- Costs of securing and maintaining a Seeing Eye or Hearing dog, including veterinarian bills and food for the animal
- Cost of eyeglasses
- Costs of transportation and lodging to obtain medical treatment or services
- Costs of maintaining an attendant, homemaker, home health aide, child care services or housekeeper
- Telephone fees for amplifiers and warning signals
- Cost of typewriter equipment for the hearing impaired

If you are unsure about whether a medical expense can be deducted from your income, ask your SNAP caseworker and bring documentation of the expense.

Know Someone Who Wants to Apply? Tell them there are 3 ways to apply for SNAP: online at Virginia Common Help (www.commonhelp.virginia.gov), in person at their local Department of Social Services (DSS) office, or by mail.