

SNAP*: The Medical Expense Deduction

*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

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 \$200
- If your monthly medical expenses are above \$235, you can claim your actual medical costs instead of the \$200 standard deduction

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

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:

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- 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?

They can apply online at www.commonhelp.virginia.gov, in person at their local Department of Social Services office, by mail or phone at 1-855-635-4370.