Prilosec® OTC 20mg approved for over-the-counter use

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Prilosec OTC (omeprazole) 20mg delayed-release tablets for over-the-counter (OTC) use, allowing the purchase of Prilosec OTC without a prescription. Most prescription strength over-the-counter medications are not covered by insurance companies, including Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico (BCBSNM). **Effective April 1, 2004, the Prilosec and omeprazole (generic Prilosec) 20mg dose will no longer be covered by the BCBSNM prescription drug plan.** Prilosec 10mg and 40mg strengths will continue to be covered under the prescription drug plan benefit.

Consumers can expect to pay approximately $24 to $30 for a 30-day supply of Prilosec OTC. The makers of Prilosec had charged pharmacies $90 or more for the same amount.

Patients who are taking Prilosec 20mg for conditions other than frequent heartburn symptoms should consult with their physician. Physicians may recommend changing to an alternative that is covered by the BCBSNM prescription drug plan.