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Pharmacy and Medication — How It Works in Germany

Prescription, over-the-counter, co-pay: How to get Medikamente in Germany and what they cost. Status: March 2026.

Deutsche Begriffe: Apotheke | Rezept | Medikament | Zuzahlung | Hausarzt

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Prescription vs. Over-the-Counter

Type	Examples	Where to Buy
Prescription Required	Antibiotics, blood pressure medication, strong painkillers	Apotheke only with Rezept from doctor
Pharmacy-Only	Ibuprofen 400mg, nasal spray, cough syrup	Apotheke without Rezept
Freely Available	Vitamin tablets, bandages, teas	Drugstore (dm, Rossmann) or Apotheke

Co-payment

For **prescription Medikamente** you pay a co-payment:

- **€5-10** per Medikament (10% of price, minimum €5, maximum €10)
- **Exemption** possible with low income (burden limit: 2% of annual income, chronically ill: 1%)

Emergency Pharmacy

Pharmacies offer **night and weekend service** (rotating):

- Finder: **apothekenfinder.mobi** or phone **0800 00 22 833** (free)
- Emergency surcharge: **€2.50** extra

Online Pharmacies

You can **order over-the-counter Medikamente online** — often cheaper:

- shop-apotheke.com, docmorris.de, medpex.de
- Check: EU safety logo on website
- **Prescription Medikamente** only with original Rezept sent in

Tips

- **Ask for generics:** Same active ingredient Medikamente are often much cheaper
- **Green Rezept** = recommendation, but you pay yourself (not covered)
- **Red Rezept** = insurance Rezept, co-pay applies (valid 28 days)
- **Blue Rezept** = private Rezept (you pay full price)
- **Bring vaccination card** — doctor can enter vaccinations directly