

FINLAND

Recent and planned changes in pharmaceutical policies 2023

CHANGES IN PRICING

Pharmacy mark-ups of prescription medicines, especially the mark-ups for most expensive medicines have been lowered. The new mark-up formula took effect in the beginning of 2023.

New formula

Wholesale Price (WP), €	Retail Price, €
0–7.49	1.42 x WP
7.50–39.99	1.35 x WP + 0.52 euros
40.00–99.99	1.24 x WP + 4.92 euros
100.00–399.99	1.15 x WP + 13.92 euros
400.00–1 499.99	1,10 x WP + 33,92 euros
1 500–	1 x WP + 183.92 euros

CHANGES IN REIMBURSEMENT

The annual maximum limit on out-of-pocket medicine expenses for 2023 was left at its 2022 level (EUR 592.16).

A wider selection of inhaled medicines will be substitutable in the pharmacy and included in the reference price system from 1st April, 2023.

OTHER CHANGES

Prescriptions of biological products are valid 1 year only (previously 2 years) from 1st January 2023 onwards.

Prescribers has an obligation to prescribe the lowest cost option when biosimilars are available. From the beginning of 2017, this has been regulated at the level of Decree of Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, but from the beginning of this year in the Act on Electronic Prescriptions. Prescription habits of individual physicians will be supervised by the Social Insurance Institution.

Biological medicines will be substitutable in the pharmacy from 1st January 2024. The policy applies low-molecular-weight heparins from 1st January 2024, other biologicals except insulins from 1st October, 2024, glargine insulin from 1st January 2025, and long acting insulins from 1st October, 2025. Short acting insulins and biological products used by patients under 18 years old will be excluded from substitution.

SPECIAL TOPIC:

Developing and implementing pharmaceutical policies in view of the current challenges (soaring inflation, medicine price increases, increasing no. of medicine shortages)

Medicine shortages: The reported number of medicine shortages has slightly increased from the previous year. Shortages most often occur in therapeutic groups that are most commonly used, such as medicines affecting the nervous system and the cardio-vascular system. From 2021, marketing authorisation holders have paid a higher fee for late announcements of future shortages. Finland is, among many other EU countries, involved in the EU project addressing shortages, starting in 2023.

Prices: In outpatient care, maximum wholesale prices and reimbursement status of pharmaceuticals are confirmed by the Pharmaceutical Pricing Board (PPB). Pharmaceutical companies can apply for an increase of the maximum wholesale price confirmed for a product. The application has to include information on changes of a permanent nature that have taken place in circumstances affecting the price formation. Yearly number of applications has been very low. In 2021, PPB processed 3 applications (1 rejected, 2 withdrawn) and in 2022 none.