

Individual taxpayers may be able to claim medical expense deductions on their tax returns. However, the rules can be challenging, and it can be difficult to qualify. Here are five points to keep in mind:

1. You must itemize to claim the deduction and have quite a few expenses. The medical expense deduction can only be claimed to the extent your unreimbursed costs exceed 7.5% of your adjusted gross income. If your total itemized deductions in 2023 will exceed your standard deduction, [moving or “bunching” nonurgent medical procedures](#) and other controllable expenses into this year may allow you to exceed the 7.5% floor and benefit from the deduction.

2. Health insurance premiums may help. This can total thousands of dollars a year. Even if your employer provides health coverage, you may be able to deduct the portion of the premiums that you pay. Long-term care insurance premiums are also included as medical expenses, subject to limits based on age.

3. Transportation counts. The cost of getting to and from medical treatments counts as a medical expense. This includes taxi fares, public transportation, or using your own car. Car costs can be calculated at 22 cents a mile for miles driven in 2023, plus tolls and parking. Alternatively, you can deduct certain actual costs (such as for gas and oil) that directly relate to your medical transportation.

4. Controllable costs are key. These include the costs of glasses, hearing aids, dental work, mental health counseling, and other ongoing expenses in connection with medical needs. Purely cosmetic expenses generally aren't eligible. Prescription drugs (including insulin) qualify, but over-the-counter aspirin and vitamins don't. Neither do amounts paid for items and treatments that are illegal under federal law (such as medical marijuana), even if state law permits them. The services of therapists and nurses can qualify if they relate to medical conditions.

5. Don't overlook smoking cessation and weight-loss programs. Amounts paid for participating in smoking cessation programs and for prescribed drugs designed to alleviate nicotine withdrawal are deductible. However, nonprescription nicotine gum and patches aren't. A weight-loss program is deductible if undertaken as a treatment for a disease diagnosed by a physician. Deductible expenses include fees paid to join a program and attend periodic meetings. The cost of diet food isn't deductible.

Still Unsure?

The [IRS Publication 502](#) provides complete details on this topic.

Maximize your tax return and deductions claims by working with our team of tax professionals. [Call us today](#) to plan for year-end tax deductions, and to schedule your 2021 tax return appointment.

Additional Resources

- [The “Hidden” Advantage of HSAs](#)
- [Seniors: Medicare Premiums Could Lower Your Tax Bill](#)