



When medical expenses are — and aren't — tax deductible

If you had significant medical expenses last year, you may be wondering what you can deduct on your 2025 income tax return. Income-based thresholds and other rules can make it hard to claim the medical expense deduction. At the same time, more types of expenses may be eligible than you might expect.

Limits on the deduction

Medical expenses are deductible only if they weren't reimbursable by insurance or paid via tax-advantaged accounts (such as Flexible Spending Accounts or Health Savings Accounts). In addition, they're deductible only to the extent that, in aggregate, they exceed 7.5% of your adjusted gross income (AGI).

For example, if your 2025 AGI was \$100,000, your eligible medical expenses during the year would have to total more than \$7,500 for you to claim the deduction — and only the amount in excess of that floor would be deductible. If you had \$10,000 in eligible expenses, your potential deduction would be \$2,500.

In addition, medical expenses are deductible only if you itemize deductions. For itemizing to be beneficial, your itemized deductions must exceed your standard deduction. Due to changes under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that were made permanent by last year's One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), many taxpayers no longer itemize.

However, some taxpayers who hadn't been itemizing recently may benefit from itemizing for 2025 because of the OBBBA's quadrupling of the state and local tax deduction limit. If you fall into that category, you should also revisit whether you can benefit from the medical expense deduction on your 2025 income tax return.

What expenses are eligible?

If you do expect to itemize deductions on your 2025 income tax return, now is a good time to review your medical expenses for the year and see if you had enough to exceed the 7.5% of AGI floor. Eligible expenses include many costs besides hospital and doctor bills. Here are some other types of expenses you may have had in 2025 that could be deductible:

Transportation. The cost of getting to and from medical treatment is an eligible expense. This includes taxi fares, public transportation or using your own vehicle. Your vehicle costs can be calculated at 21 cents per mile for medical miles driven in 2025, plus tolls and parking. Alternatively, you can deduct certain actual vehicle-related costs, including gas and oil, but not general costs such as insurance, depreciation and maintenance.

Insurance premiums. The cost of health insurance is a medical expense that can total thousands of dollars a year. Even if your employer provides you with coverage, you can deduct the portion of the premiums you paid — as long as it wasn't paid pretax out of your paychecks.

Long-term care insurance premiums also qualify, subject to dollar limits based on age. Here are the 2025 limits:

- 40 and under: \$480
- 41 to 50: \$900
- 51 to 60: \$1,800
- 61 to 70: \$4,810
- Over 70: \$6,020

Therapists and nurses. Services provided by individuals other than physicians can qualify if they relate to a medical condition and aren't for general health. For example, the cost of physical therapy after knee surgery qualifies, but the cost of a personal trainer to help you get in shape doesn't. Also qualifying are amounts paid for acupuncture and those paid to a psychologist for medical care. In addition, certain long-term care services required by chronically ill individuals are eligible.

Eye glasses, hearing aids, dental work and prescriptions. Deductible expenses include the cost of glasses, contacts, hearing aids, dentures and most dental work. Purely cosmetic expenses (such as teeth whitening) don't qualify, but certain medically necessary cosmetic surgery is deductible. Prescription drugs qualify, but nonprescription drugs such as aspirin don't, even if a physician recommends them.

Smoking-cessation programs. Amounts paid to participate in a smoking-cessation program and for prescribed drugs designed to alleviate nicotine withdrawal are deductible expenses. However, nonprescription gum and certain nicotine patches aren't.

Weight-loss programs. A weight-loss program is a deductible expense if undertaken as treatment for a disease diagnosed by a physician. This could be obesity or another disease, such as hypertension, for which a doctor directs you to lose weight. It's a good idea to get a written diagnosis. In these cases, deductible expenses include fees paid to join a weight-loss program and attend meetings. However, foods for a weight-loss program generally aren't deductible.

Dependents and others. You can deduct the medical expenses you pay for dependents, such as your children. Additionally, you may be able to deduct medical expenses you pay for an individual, such as a parent or grandparent, who would qualify as your dependent except that he or she has too much gross income or files jointly. In most cases, the medical expenses of a child of divorced parents can be claimed by the parent who pays them.

Determining if you can benefit

After reviewing this list of eligible expenses, do you think you had enough in 2025 to exceed the 7.5% of AGI floor? Or do you have questions about whether specific expenses qualify? Contact us. We can determine if you can benefit from the medical expense deduction — and other tax breaks — on your 2025 income tax return.

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