



The Price of Prescription Drugs: It Matters Where You Live



The price of prescription drugs varies widely within Bridgeport and between Bridgeport and its neighboring suburbs.

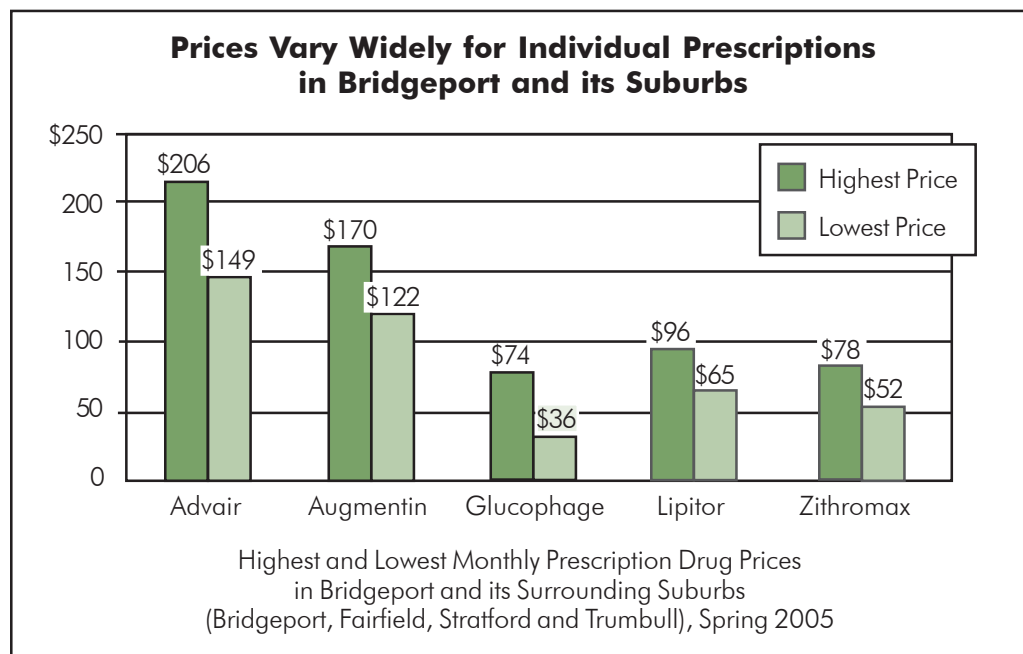
Prescription medicine can be very expensive, particularly for families who do not have health insurance and who pay the full cost of their medicine. During spring 2005, the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition surveyed pharmacies in Bridgeport, Fairfield, Stratford and Trumbull and analyzed the cost of 13 common prescription medicines. We found wide variation in prices for our "market basket" of 13 drugs – nearly \$225 per month – among pharmacies in Bridgeport and its suburbs.

Prescription drug prices differ within the City of Bridgeport:

-  If you buy the 13 prescription drugs we surveyed at different pharmacies in Bridgeport, the total cost will range from a low of \$920 per month to a high of \$1,108 per month, a 20.4% difference.
-  If you buy the 13 prescription drugs we surveyed in the Upper East Side of Bridgeport, they will cost more than if you buy them in the West End. The average price for these prescription drugs is \$185 more a month in the Upper East Side than in the West End.

Prescription drug prices also differ between Bridgeport and its neighboring suburbs:

-  If you buy all 13 prescription drugs surveyed at the CVS pharmacy in the Upper East Side in Bridgeport, it will cost you \$70 more than at the CVS on Barnum Avenue in Stratford.
-  If you fill a prescription for Advair, an asthma medication, in Bridgeport, it can cost you as much as \$564 more a year than if you fill the same prescription in Trumbull.



The prescription survey was conducted in spring 2005. While the prices may have changed since the survey was done, the trends BCAC found make the case for comparison shopping for prescriptions.

WHAT WE ANALYZED

Twenty-nine pharmacies supplied their prices for thirteen drugs that are commonly used by adults and children to treat acute and chronic medical conditions. The following drugs were included in the study:

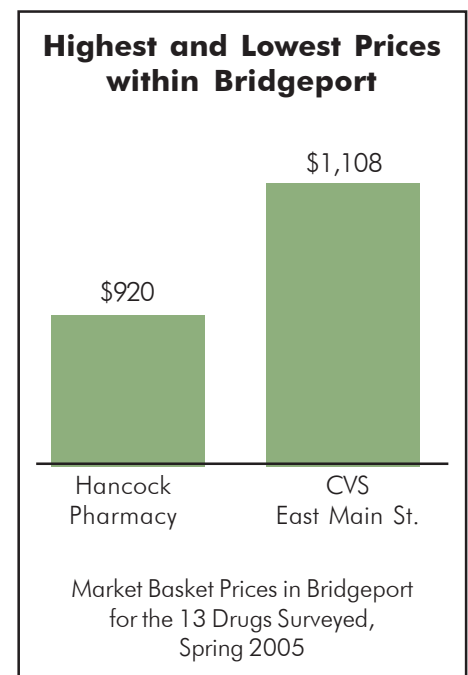
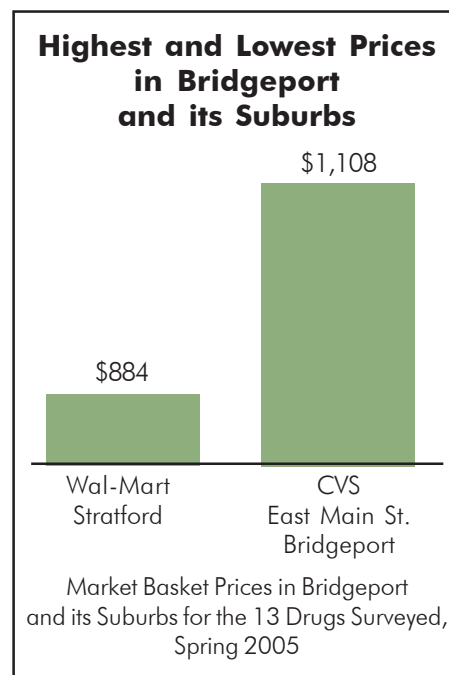
Drugs Included in the Study: "The Market Basket"	
Drug Name/Strength/Quantity	Condition Treated
Advair Diskus (250-50 mcg), 1 disk	Asthma
Albuterol (17 gm), 1 inhaler	Asthma
Amoxicillin (250 mg/5 ml), 150 ml	Infection
Augmentin (875 mg), 20 tablets	Infection
Glucophage (500 mg), 60 tablets	Diabetes
Hydrochlorothiazide (25 mg), 30 tablets	High Blood Pressure
Lipitor (10 mg), 30 tablets	High Cholesterol
Nexium (20 mg), 30 tablets	Digestive Disorders
Norvasc (5 mg), 30 tablets	Heart Disease
Ortho TriCyclen, 1 pkg, 28 tablets	Birth Control
Zithromax (250mg/5 ml), 6 tablets	Infection
Zoloft (50 mg), 30 tablets	Depression
Zyrtec (10 mg), 30 tablets	Allergies

PRICE DIFFERENCES AMONG PHARMACIES

The cost of a "market basket" of all 13 prescription medicines filled in pharmacies in Bridgeport and its suburbs varies as much as \$224 per month – a 25% difference.

- There is a wide range in market basket prices among pharmacies in Bridgeport and its suburbs. Market basket prices range from a low of \$884 per month at Wal-Mart in Stratford to a high of \$1,108 a month at the CVS Pharmacy located at 2610 East Main Street in the Upper East Side of Bridgeport – a 25% difference.
- Within Bridgeport, market basket prices range from a low of \$920 a month at Hancock Pharmacy in the West End of Bridgeport to a high of \$1,108 at the CVS in the Upper East Side – a 20% difference.

Prices for prescription drugs vary widely among pharmacies

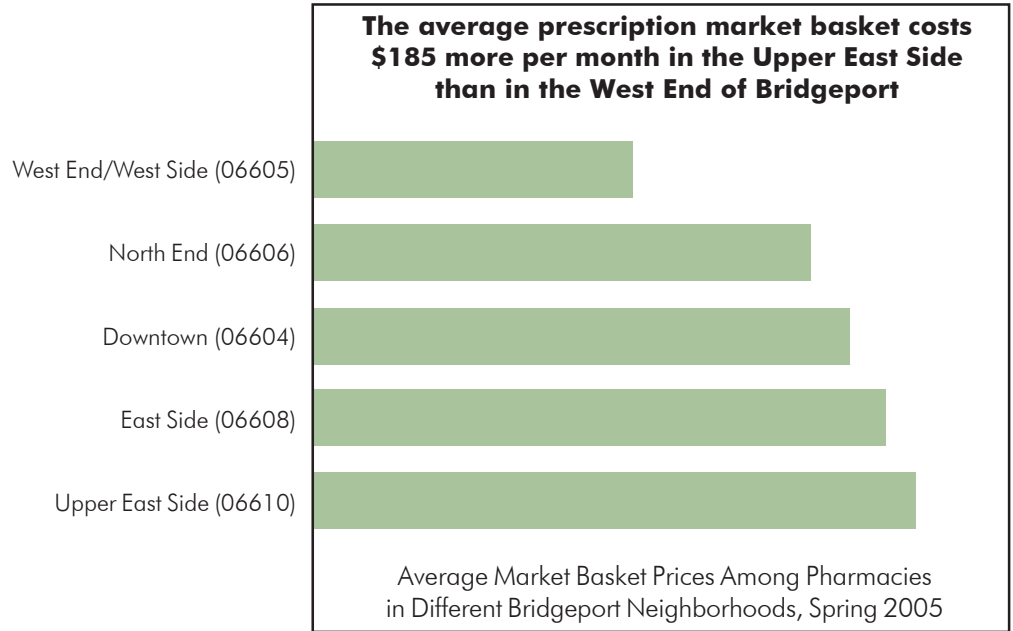


PRICE DIFFERENCES AMONG NEIGHBORHOODS

It matters where you live in Bridgeport.

There is a significant difference in market basket prescription drug prices among Bridgeport neighborhoods.

The average market basket price ranges from a low of \$920 per month in the West End/West Side of Bridgeport (zip code 06605) to a high of \$1,105 in the Upper East Side of Bridgeport (zip code 06610) – a difference of \$185 per month.



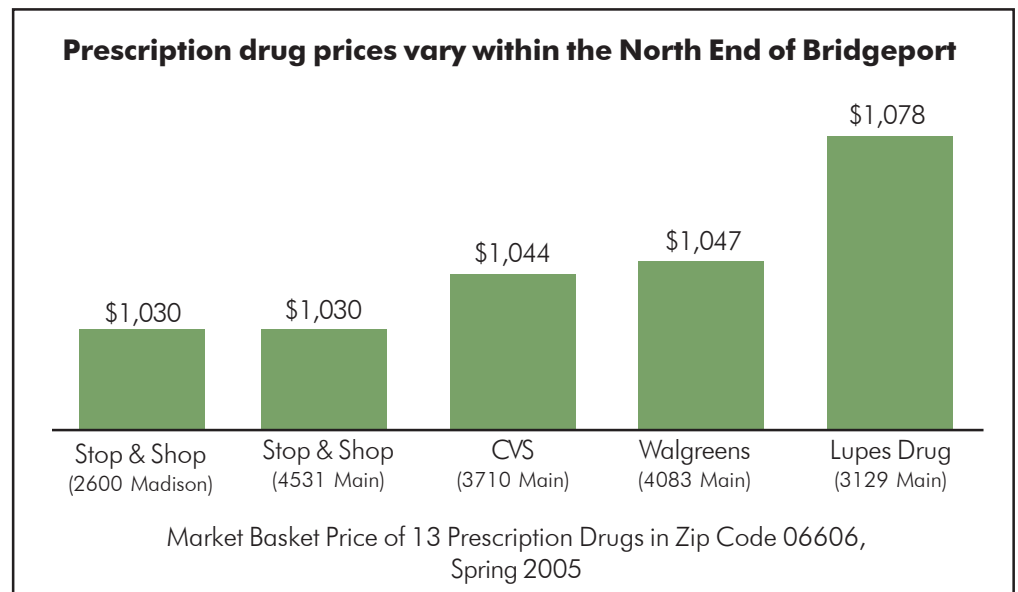
A prescription of Augmentin, an antibiotic, ranges from a low of \$121.52 at Hancock Pharmacy in the West End to a high of \$169.99 at the CVS stores on Boston Avenue in the Upper East Side and Main Street in the North End, a difference of \$48.47.

PRICE DIFFERENCES WITHIN NEIGHBORHOODS

It matters where you shop.

Prices for the market basket vary within the same Bridgeport neighborhood.

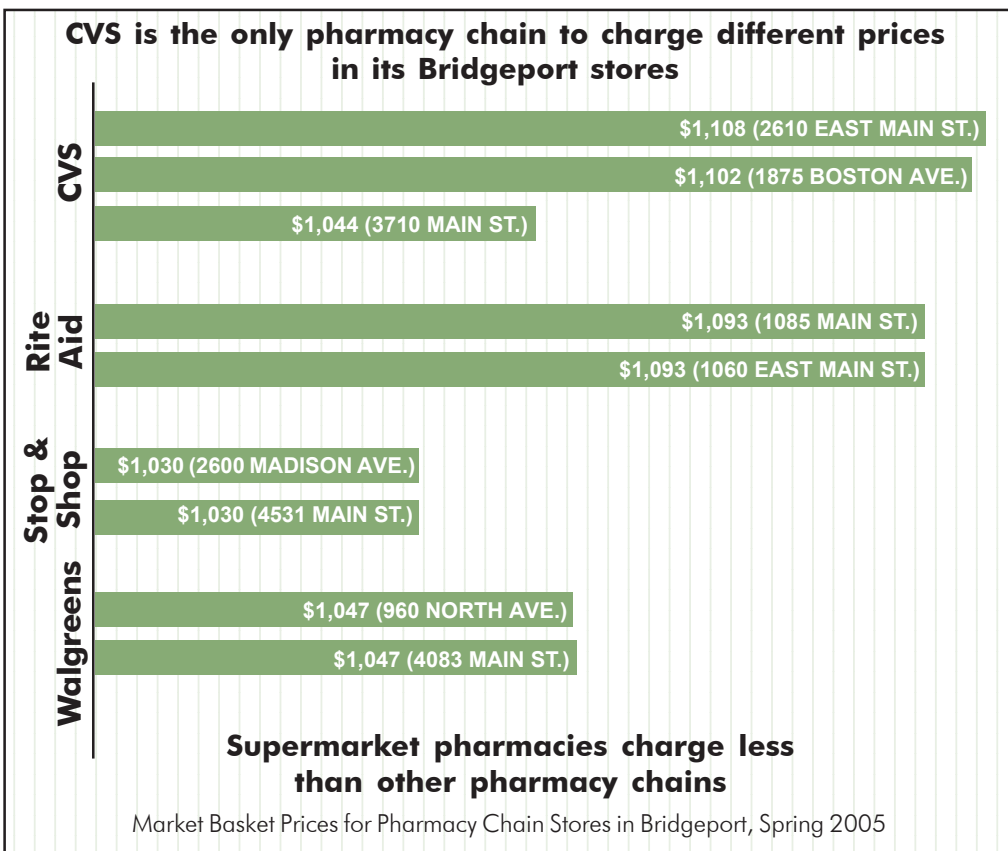
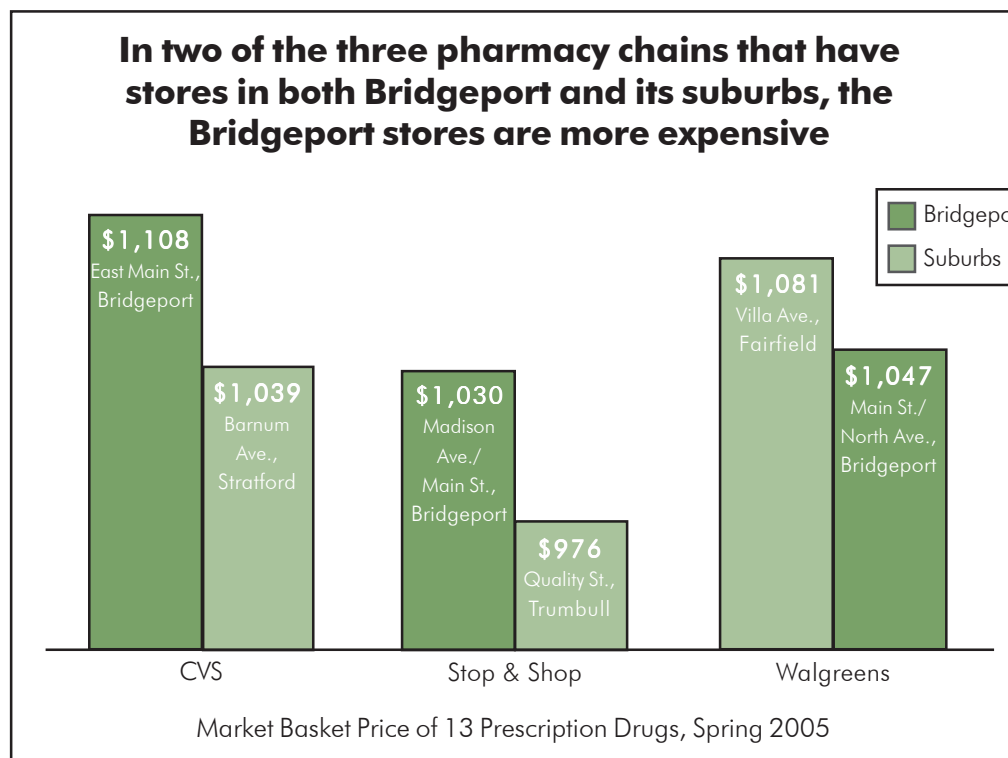
Within the North End of Bridgeport, zip code 06606, there is as much as a \$48 difference between the high and low prices of the market basket.



At the CVS, 3710 Main Street, a prescription for Augmentin, an antibiotic, cost \$169.99 per month, while the same prescription at Walgreens, 4083 Main Street, less than one-half mile away, is \$135.29 per month, a difference of almost \$35.

PRICE DIFFERENCES AMONG CHAIN PHARMACIES

Chain pharmacies charge different prices at different locations.

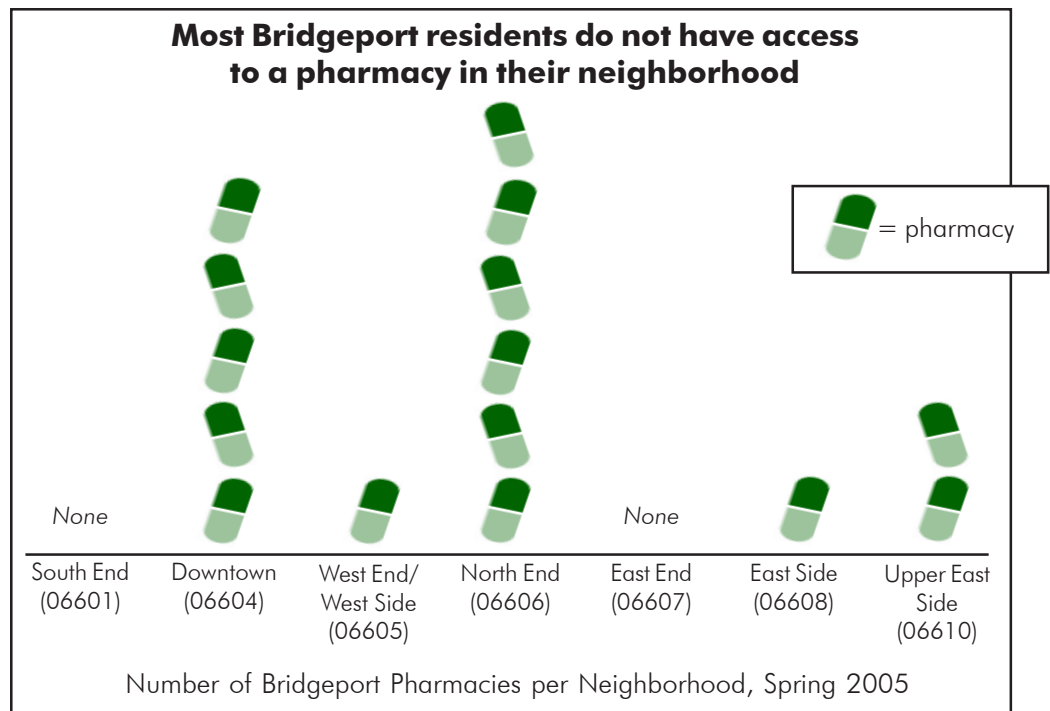


Advair, an asthma medication, costs \$173 per month at the CVS located at 3710 Main Street in the North End of Bridgeport. The same prescription costs \$193 per month at the CVS on East Main Street in the Upper East Side. That is a difference of \$240 a year.

There are only two independent neighborhood pharmacies in Bridgeport: Hancock Pharmacy in the West End and Lupes Drug Store in the North End. Chain pharmacies have overtaken the prescription market in Bridgeport, as they have across the state. Prescription prices at independent pharmacies in Bridgeport are no more expensive than they are at some of the chain pharmacies. Hancock Pharmacy has the least expensive market basket, \$920, among all pharmacies in Bridgeport. Lupes' market basket, \$1,078, is mid-priced.

NUMBER OF PHARMACIES DIFFERS BY NEIGHBORHOOD

Access to pharmacies in Bridgeport differs depending on where you live.



- Nearly 12,000 Bridgeport households do not have access to their own cars: 44% of households in the South End; 41% in the East Side; 29% in the East End; and 34% in the West End. These residents are not able to travel easily outside their own neighborhood or to other towns to look for the best price for their medicine; they rely on easy access to stores and services close to where they live.

MOST AND LEAST EXPENSIVE DRUG PRICES

Where the least and most expensive prescription prices in Bridgeport and its suburbs are found:

	Least Expensive	Most Expensive
Advair	Stop & Shop (Trumbull)	Brooks Drugs (869 Post Road, Fairfield)
Albuterol	Hancock/Lupes (Bridgeport)	Walgreens (Fairfield)
Amoxicillin	Lupes (Bridgeport)	CVS (1875 Boston/2610 E Main, Bridgeport)
Augmentin	Hancock (Bridgeport)	CVS (3710 Main/1875 Boston, Bridgeport; 961 & 1968 Black Rock Turnpike, Fairfield)
Glucophage	Stop & Shop (Trumbull)	Mackenzie's (Trumbull)
Hydrochlorothiazide	Wal-Mart (Stratford)	Walgreens (Stratford; Fairfield)
Lipitor	Wal-Mart (Stratford)	Rotary (Stratford)
Nexium	Wal-Mart (Stratford)	Lupes (Bridgeport)
Norvasc	Hancock (Bridgeport)	Mackenzie's (Trumbull)
OrthoTriCyclen	Brooks Drugs (869 Post Road, Fairfield)	Lupes (Bridgeport)
Zithromax	Hancock (Bridgeport)	Rite Aid (1085 Main/1060 E Main, Bridgeport)
Zolof	Hancock (Bridgeport)	Rite Aid (1085 Main/1060 E Main, Bridgeport)
Zyrtec	Hancock (Bridgeport)	Rotary (Stratford)

WHERE SHOULD YOU BUY YOUR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS?

There is no simple answer to this question. Because prices vary widely at each pharmacy, you should check prices at several pharmacies before deciding where to fill your prescriptions. But, it is also important for you to consider a number of other factors, in addition to price, when deciding where to buy your prescriptions. Convenience, particularly if transportation is an issue, as well as the knowledge and helpfulness of pharmacy staff are important considerations. Also, if you take several medications, it is generally a good idea to fill prescriptions at the same pharmacy, so that the pharmacist will be aware of potential adverse interactions and can discuss the situation with your physician and you. Your pharmacist may ask if you will accept a generic substitute. These are often less expensive than brand names. You should check with your physician to make sure the generic substitute is acceptable.

To do an online comparison of the price of prescription medicine by pharmacy, visit the Connecticut Attorney General's website at www.ct.gov/ag and click on "Pharmacy Prescription Drug Prices." The website includes the average price reported by pharmacies for commonly prescribed medications for persons on Medicaid, ConnPACE and other medical assistance programs. Internet access is available for free in all public libraries in Bridgeport.

Low-Cost Prescriptions for People with No Health Insurance

The Partnership for Prescription Assistance is a collaboration of pharmaceutical companies, doctors, patient advocacy organizations and community groups to help people who don't have health insurance get the prescription drugs they need free or low-cost. To find out more information on Partnership for Prescription Assistance, call toll-free, 1-888-4PPA-NOW (1-888-477-2669) or online, www.PPARx.org. In addition, some pharmaceutical companies have special programs for people who do not have health insurance coverage. Ask your doctor for more information.

We would like to thank the following pharmacies for their participation in our study:

Brooks Pharmacy

869 Post Rd., Fairfield
1619 Post Rd., Fairfield
3680 Main St., Stratford

CVS Pharmacy

3710 Main St., Bridgeport
1875 Boston Ave., Bridgeport
2610 East Main St., Bridgeport
1968 Black Rock Tpk., Fairfield
961 Black Rock Tpk., Fairfield
1 Hawley Ln., Stratford
1425 Barnum Ave., Stratford

Eckerd Pharmacy

525 Tunxis Hill Rd., Fairfield

Hancock Pharmacy

1557 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport

Lupes Drug Store

3129 Main St., Bridgeport
2035 Black Rock Tpk., Fairfield

Mackenzie's Pharmacy

930 White Plains Rd., Trumbull

Osco Drug Store at Shaws

250 Barnum Ave. Cutoff, Stratford

Rite Aid Pharmacy

1085 Main St., Bridgeport
1060 E. Main St., Bridgeport

Rotary Home Health

1030 Barnum Ave., Stratford

Stop & Shop Pharmacy

2600 Madison Ave., Bridgeport
4531 Main St., Bridgeport
1160 Kings Hwy., Fairfield
200 East Main St., Stratford
40 Quality St., Trumbull

Wal-Mart Supercenter

150 Barnum Ave. Cutoff, Stratford

Walgreens

4083 Main St., Bridgeport
960 North Ave., Bridgeport
740 Villa Ave., Fairfield
1601 Barnum Ave., Stratford

The following pharmacies were invited to participate in the study but declined to do so:

A & P Super Foodmart

1700 Park Ave., Bridgeport

Ethical Pharmacy (Arrow)

522 Pequonnock St., Bridgeport
1260 Main St., Bridgeport

L & R Pharmacy (Arrow)

2660 Main St., Bridgeport

Oronoque Pharmacy

7365 Main St., Stratford

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