

# The 15 best-selling drugs of 2012

Some of the biggest blockbusters known to the Pharma industry have dropped off the patent cliff and tumbled into the brutal land of generic therapies, where low-priced competition lays sales to waste. The once-mighty Lipitor is finished as a big earner, as we see in our new list of the 15 top-selling pharmaceuticals in 2012. In place of the small molecule standbys, biologics like Humira have risen to the top.



John D. Carroll

The year isn't quite wrapped, of course. But analysts at [Evaluate Pharma](#) have come up with estimates on how the top 15 drugs will perform this year. And a team of writers--Tracy Staton, Alison Bryant, Eric Palmer and myself--divvied up the list to explore how this year's crop of best-selling drugs made it into the elite group.

It's hard to overestimate the importance of the rise of biologics like Humira. Operating with considerably improved periods of patent protection, companies now control products that should remain on top for years to come. That's why Abbott can spin off its pharma operations as AbbVie at the end of this year, confident that it has a mega blockbuster on hand to fund operations for quite some time.

Even after Enbrel finds itself with biosimilar competition, the effect on Amgen will be nothing like what small molecule makers face when generics rush in to chop prices to a fraction of their branded levels. The competition will have to execute big late-stage studies and win approval on their own accord. And that will limit price reductions on copycats to come, preserving market clout--and sales--for aging therapies.

Barring development of new mega blockbusters, this list is likely to remain stable for some time. That's positive for the companies and their investors. It will also help fund major R&D operations around the globe. And the drive to improve performance should continue to drive innovation. -- John Carroll, Editor-in-Chief.

- 1 [Humira](#)
- 2 [Enbrel](#)
- 3 [Advair/Seretide](#)
- 4 [Remicade](#)
- 5 [Rituxan](#)
- 6 [Crestor](#)
- 7 [Lantus](#)
- 8 [Herceptin](#)
- 9 [Avastin](#)
- 10 [Lipitor](#)
- 11 [Abilify](#)
- 12 [Plavix](#)
- 13 [Cymbalta](#)
- 14 [Gleevec](#)
- 15 [Spiriva](#)