

Editor's Choice



Cher Muzyk, wife of a government attorney impacted by the shutdown, holds the sign she carried at yesterday's DC "Rally to End the Shutdown" at her home in Nokesville, Virginia, U.S., January 11, 2019. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque



Supporters of the movement boycotting the deal with neighboring Greece to change the country's name to the Republic of North Macedonia protest in front of the parliament building in Skopje



Jan 11, 2019; Chicago, IL, USA; Griffin Dorsey is selected as the number six overall pick to Toronto FC in the first round of the 2019 MLS Super Draft at McCormick Place. Mandatory Credit: Nuccio DiNuzzo-USA TODAY Sports



Relatives and friends stand next to a pick-up carrying the coffin of Heydi Betanco, one of the five people who were shot dead, in Tegucigalpa



Deputies of the Macedonian parliament vote to pass constitutional changes to allow the Balkan country to change its name to the Republic of North Macedonia, in Skopje, Macedonia, January 11, 2019. REUTERS/ Tomislav Georgiev



A friend reacts on the coffin of Heydy Betanco, 18, one of the five people who were shot dead, in Tegucigalpa



U.S. Virginia Democratic Senator Tim Kaine (L), Sen. Mark Warner (2nd L) and Paul Rinaldi, president of National Air Traffic Controllers Association (3rd L), listen during a meeting with furloughed Virginia workers and others affected by the partial government shutdown in Alexandria, Virginia, U.S., January 11, 2019. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and his wife Susan disembark from their plane as they arrive at Abu Dhabi International Airport in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, January 11, 2019. Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/Pool via REUTERS

2019 Is The Year Of The Pig On The Chinese Zodiac

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



The Pig is the twelfth of all zodiac animals. According to one myth, the Jade Emperor said the order would be decided by the order in which they arrived to his party. Pig was late because he overslept. Another story says that a wolf destroyed his house. He had to rebuild his home before he could set off. When he arrived, he was the last one and could only take twelfth place.

Personality and characteristics
Pigs might not stand out in a crowd. But they are very realistic. Others may be all talk and no action. Pigs are the opposite. Though not wasteful spenders, they will let themselves enjoy life. They love entertainment and will occasionally treat themselves. They are a bit materialistic, but this is motivation for them to work hard. Being able to hold solid objects in their hands gives them security.

Men born in the Pig year are optimistic and gentle. They are very focused. Once they decide on a goal, they'll put everything into it.

They are not the best with money. Though cool-headed, they are also gullible. They trust others easily and are often scammed. This can cause them to lose a fortune.

Women born in the Pig year are full of excitement. They attend social events whenever possible and treat everyone genuinely. Combined with their easygoing personality, they gain everyone's trust. However, they are sometimes over-friendly. In their excitement, they can forget to give others personal space. They also have good fortune with wealth. As long as they keep at it, the efforts will not go to waste. Though they don't start with an advantage, their hard work will keep money

flowing in.
Compatibility
Most compatible with Pig: Tiger, Rabbit, Goat

Pigs are the most compatible with Tigers. The brave Tiger gives Pigs the security they need.

Least compatible with Pig: Snake, Monkey

Pigs and Snakes have clashing personalities and are the least compatible. They have biases against each other and can't compromise. It's hard to get along with Monkeys as well. The relationship is full of tension.

Careers fit for Pigs
Pigs are gentle and rarely lose their temper. Even when they do, it's never a dramatic commotion. They'll always try to compromise and settle things quickly. Because their goal in life is for everyone to live in harmony, they are suitable for careers related to charity and fundraisers.



Health and lifestyle
Pigs mostly have a great build and a resilient body. They are always spirited, as if they will never run out of energy. Their natural health is something Pigs are proud of.

But sometimes they can be overconfident and overlook some minor symptoms. If neglected for too long, even the smallest things can become grave.

Pigs in the Year of the Pig (2019)

The year of one's zodiac sign is their **本命年**(ben ming nian). It is traditionally the most unlucky year with trouble and danger lurking at every corner.

Similar to the previous year, Pigs may find luck in some areas of their life, but others

will require hard work to avoid potential pitfalls. Pigs will most likely experience many emotional ups and downs, making them feel frustrated and sad at times.

This will not be a transitional year for Pigs, and it is best to try and "stick it out" in situations if at all possible. While that can be terribly frustrating, try to remember that a key element to utilizing your luck is timing. Next year will bear good fruit for Pigs, but the time isn't right to harvest the fruits of your labor. Instead, familiarize yourself with possible oversights and improve upon them so you may take advantage of similar situations as they occur in the future. This is a key element in many Asian religions, that is to say, you may be stuck consulting the same problem over and over until you solve it.



Careers
Pigs' 2019 horoscope reveals that changing careers may bring unforeseen consequences, and in most cases should be avoided. Instead, keep your nose to the grindstone and be wary of conflict. Pigs have a way of directly confronting their problems and at times this can impair their ability to see the deeper meaning of an issue. While Pigs can expect confrontation this year it will be best to face these problems with patience and practicality, two tools that are in Pigs "tool belt" but aren't always utilized when they should be.

Luckiest Months: April 8th – July 20th
Unluckiest Months: September 12th – December 2nd

Education
The education forecast for Pigs, however, reveals some good fortune. For those seeking higher education, it seems the stars are aligned in your favor. The 2019 Pig horoscope shows that investing in education will position them to take better advantage of future opportunities.

Health
Health can be rated as a mediocre category

ry for Pigs this year. While there are no major illnesses on your horizon, Pigs will have to pay attention to minor ailments to keep them from growing into something large.

If you feel ill, don't delay in consulting a physician or healer, this is a major key to staying healthy this year. Other than this, maintain a consistent exercise regimen and a diet made up of healthy, unprocessed foods. Add more fruits and vegetables to your diet for an extra boost to your immunity



Relationships
The love forecast for Pigs is also pretty unremarkable for 2019. It seems that while this is not the year for true romance,

Fortunately for Pigs, the lack of relationship drama means they can focus on making new friends and connections. Extending their network could have a significant impact on Pigs' future, and in some respects be more rewarding than an intimate relationship. Remember not to be too quick to jump into a relationship as it may lead to more problems than it is worth, focus instead on enlarging your circle of friends.

Lifestyle
Pigs are in for almost an unfair year it seems. This year is about favoring the characteristics of Pigs in order to succeed, but for Pigs, to whom this comes naturally, they will have a difficult year and must practice patience and discipline.

It is important to remember not to be short sighted. You could focus on this year and say it is unfair, or you could focus on the future and realize that this time is meant to set up opportunities for the long term and practice the elements that will make you successful in your future endeavors.

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2019 LUNAR NEW YEAR SPECIAL EDITION 2019農曆新年特刊價目表

截止日期 DEADLINE: 1/25/2019 出版日期 PUBLISHING DATE: 2/1/2019

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Drug Companies Greet 2019 With U.S. Price Hikes

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



have been announced yet. The United States, which leaves drug pricing to market competition, has higher prices than in other countries where governments directly or indirectly control the costs, making it the world’s most lucrative market for manufacturers. HHS has proposed policy changes aimed at lowering drug prices and passing more of the discounts negotiated by health insurers on to patients. Those measures are not expected to provide relief to consumers in the short-term, however, and fall short of giving government health agencies direct authority to negotiate or regulate drug prices.



“It’s business as usual” for drugmakers, said Rx Savings Solutions Chief Executive Michael Rea, who said he believes there has to be meaningful changes to the marketplace, rather than new regulations in order for drug prices to drop.

The average increase amounts to about 6 percent, said Michael Rea, founder and CEO of RX Savings Solutions, which sells software that helps employers and health plans analyze drug prices. Among the best-known drugs getting costlier are the opioid OxyContin, with a 9.5 percent jump, and the blood thinner Pradaxa, up 8 percent.

Those increases underscore the challenges facing consumers and health care plans as drug costs far outpace the rate of inflation or wage growth. Americans spent \$535 billion on prescription drugs last year, an increase of 50 percent since 2010, according to one estimate.

“A 9 percent increase isn’t just over inflation -- it’s four times inflation,” Rea noted. “No matter what, that effect is felt by consumers, by payers and the solvency of public and private health plans.”



Inflation around the U.S. remains around 2 percent. Purdue Pharmaceuticals, the manufacturer of OxyContin, didn’t immediately return requests for comment. Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, the maker of Pradaxa, said its goal “is for no patients to be denied access to our medicines because of cost.” The company offers programs for patients who can’t af-

ford medications, like co-pay assistance, a representative for the firm noted in an email.

“Taking price increases does not directly translate to increased profits for our company,” it added. “Most of the increases on our list price, or wholesale acquisition cost is lost through a competitive rebating and contracting process with insurers, pharmacy benefit managers and the government, among others.”

Discounts and rebates

Drug companies say they must raise prices to fund development of new medicines. PhRMA, the pharmacy industry’s trade group, said the analysis was “flawed and inaccurate,” failing to account for the rebates and discounts provided to insurers. “The data focus on a selective sample of companies and medicines and ignores how the competitive market works to control costs,” it said in an emailed statement. “Due to negotiations in the market, retail medicine costs grew just 0.4 percent in 2017, the slowest rate since 2012, and net prices for brand medicines grew just 1.9 percent.”



Other drugs seeing higher prices this year, according to RX: pain-relief med Subsys, made by Insys, up 9.5 percent, and Tecfidera, a psoriasis medication made by Biogen whose cost is rising 6 percent.

Paying more for the same?

Consumers don’t typically pay a drug’s list price because discounts and insurance often cut the final cost. In some cases, however, people are paying more even though the medication has had no significant change. That was the case with Turing Pharmaceuticals, whose CEO, Martin Shkreli, in 2015 became the poster boy for excessive drug price hikes after he engineered a 5,000 percent price increase for the life-saving medication Daraprim. Insulin is one vital drug that has drawn attention from lawmakers and diabetics, some of whom report cutting back on the medication after prices more than tripled from 2002 to 2013. Since then, insulin prices have continued to climb -- costs for the drug from two manufacturers rose almost 8 percent in 2017.

That may shock some consumers, given

that insulin is a nearly 100-year-old medication whose inventors sold the patent for about \$3 to get the drug to as many diabetics as possible. But drugmakers have made small tweaks to their insulin products, allowing them to maintain their patents for years.



Martin Shkreli resigned as the CEO of Turing Pharmaceuticals, one day after being arrested for securities fraud in New York City.

One diabetes drug whose price has shot up lately is Metformin, which treats high blood sugar. Its manufacturer, Granules Pharmaceutical, in December jacked up the price 148 percent, Rea said.

Granules said the figure was misleading. “We launched Metformin XR in September 2018 and due to changes in the average wholesale price, it appears Granules raised pricing by 148 percent,” wrote Granules executive Vijay Ramanavaru in an email. “However in actuality our net pricing in 2018 was static.”

Trump’s promise President Donald Trump has vowed to reduce drug prices, making it a key part of his election campaign, and last year accused drugmakers of “getting away with murder.”

So far, there’s little evidence his administration’s efforts are slowing the steady increase in drug prices. Earlier this year, Pfizer raised the price on some of its well-known medications, including the erectile dysfunction drug Viagra.

“I think the ideas are great, and I commend anybody who is fighting the fight with this,” Rea said. “It’s like you have the Hoover Dam and it has 50 holes in it, and you take a stick of bubble gum and put it in one hole. If you’re effective, the water will still rush out of the other 49 holes.” (Courtesy reuters and cbsnews.com)

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