

What Inflation Did to Prices in Auto Repair and Medical Care

Seven years of CPI data for car repair, medical services and overall prices, and what they do not tell us

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+57.0%

car maintenance and repair prices, Sept. 2019 to Sept. 2026

+31.2%

all items over the same period

+21.2%

medical care services over the same period

+5.8%

car repair, 12 months to Sept. 2026 (all items +3.7%)

BOTTOM LINE

Car maintenance and repair prices are up 57.0% since September 2019, nearly double the 31.2% rise in overall prices, while medical care services are up 21.2%. Atlanta's latest release shows lower overall inflation than the national figure, but the two cover different months. No home repair or trade price series was retrieved, so this study speaks only to auto and medical services.

Executive Summary

Prices do not move together. Since September 2019, the cost of getting a car repaired has risen far faster than the overall price level, while medical care services have risen more slowly. For businesses that sell services, that difference changes how a price conversation lands with customers.

This brief uses Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI) data, September to September, from 2019 through 2026, for motor vehicle maintenance and repair, medical care services and all items, plus the latest Atlanta metro release. It also says where the data stop: no home repair, HVAC, plumbing or roofing price series was retrieved.

Finding 1: Car Repair Prices Rose Far Faster Than Prices Overall

The CPI for motor vehicle maintenance and repair went from 298.441 in September 2019 to 468.491 in September 2026, a rise of 57.0%. All items rose 31.2% over the same period, and medical care services rose 21.2%.

+57.0%

change in the CPI for motor vehicle maintenance and repair, September 2019 to September 2026, vs. +31.2% for all items.

Price change, September 2019 to September 2026 (U.S. city average CPI)

Motor vehicle maintenance and repair		+57.0%
All items		+31.2%
Medical care services		+21.2%

Source: BLS CPI-U, not seasonally adjusted, via FRED series CUUR0000SETD, CPIAUCNS and CUUR0000SAM2. Bars on a 0-60% scale.

Finding 2: The Biggest Jumps Came in 2022 and 2023

Car repair prices rose 11.1% in the year to September 2022 and 10.2% in the year to September 2023, then slowed to 4.9% and 7.7%. The latest year-over-year change, to September 2026, is 5.8%, still well above overall inflation of 3.7%.

Year to September	Car maintenance and repair	Medical care services	All items
2020	3.3%	4.9%	1.4%
2021	4.0%	0.9%	5.4%
2022	11.1%	6.5%	8.2%
2023	10.2%	-2.6%	3.7%
2024	4.9%	3.6%	2.4%
2025	7.7%	3.9%	3.0%
2026	5.8%	2.5%	3.7%

Medical care services fell 2.6% in the year to September 2023 before rising again. Over the full period, medical services have not kept pace with overall inflation.

Finding 3: Atlanta Looks Different From the National Picture

The latest BLS release for the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell area covers August 2026 and shows all items up 2.9% over twelve months. Transportation was up 6.3%, while shelter was up 1.3% and medical care was down 0.3%. The national figures in this brief are for September 2026, so the two sets of numbers are not for the same month.

12-month change	Atlanta metro (Aug. 2026)	U.S. city average (Sept. 2026)
All items	2.9%	3.7%
Shelter	1.3%	3.2%
Medical care (Atlanta, all medical care; U.S., services)	-0.3%	2.5%
Transportation (Atlanta)	6.3%	Not compared
Motor vehicle maintenance and repair	Not reported	5.8%

Atlanta's medical care figure covers all medical care, while the national figure here is medical care services only, so the two are not like for like.

Finding 4: What These Data Do Not Cover

The CPI tracks the price of a fixed set of goods and services over time. It does not measure what a particular business charges, a business's own costs, or demand. The series retrieved cover car repair and medical services but not home repair, HVAC, plumbing, roofing or professional services, so no claim is made about those industries. The BLS household operations series was incomplete in the data retrieved.

What This Means for Marketers and Service Businesses

- 1 **Do not assume all prices moved the same way.** Car repair rose much faster than overall inflation, and medical services rose more slowly. Price messaging should fit the industry.
- 2 **Expect price questions in automotive.** With repair prices up 57% in seven years, customers have a reason to compare. Clear estimates and explanations of what drives a price address that. That is an inference from the data.
- 3 **Be careful with 'prices are rising everywhere' claims.** Medical care services rose less than overall prices over this period.
- 4 **Cite the series and the month.** The national and Atlanta figures above cover different months. Name the source and date whenever a number is quoted.
- 5 **Refresh each quarter.** The BLS publishes CPI monthly. A recurring update would keep these numbers current for client pages.

Data Table: Key Figures and Sources

Series (September values)	2019	2026
Motor vehicle maintenance and repair	298.441	468.491
Medical care services	540.813	655.370
All items	256.759	336.940

About Make It Loud Digital Marketing

Make It Loud Digital Marketing, based in Buford, Georgia, provides SEO, AI search optimization (GEO), Google Business Profile optimization, web design, Google Ads, social media marketing, podcast production and authority marketing for businesses across Metro Atlanta and North Georgia. See makeitloud.net or call (678) 325-4007.

Methodology, Limitations & Sources

Method. All figures come from public documents reviewed in October 2026 and are reported as published. Where a figure came from a news or association summary of a primary study, it is labeled as reported.

Limitations.

- CPI measures price change for a fixed basket, not any one business's prices, costs or demand.
- Percent changes were calculated from September index values (not seasonally adjusted) on FRED; the BLS-reported 12-month changes for September 2026 (3.7%, 5.8%, 2.5%) match them.
- No home repair, HVAC, plumbing, roofing or professional services price series was retrieved.
- The Atlanta release is for August 2026 and the national figures are for September 2026.
- Atlanta's medical care category and the national medical care services series are not the same measure.
- Service-industry pricing may differ from CPI categories.

Disclaimer. This brief offers general information only. It is not legal, financial or purchasing advice. Figures come from third-party public sources and may change; confirm current details before relying on them.

Sources

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index, Table 2 (September 2026 release).
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index, Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell (August 2026,

published Sept. 11, 2026).

- FRED (St. Louis Fed), BLS series CUUR0000SETD, CUUR0000SAM2, CPIAUCNS.