

# Medicine tips

## Information about generic medicines

### Commonly asked questions about generic medicines<sup>1-2</sup>

Prescription medicines can be a big part of your health care costs. Using generic medicine may help reduce some of these costs. Generic medicines are safe and work as well as brand-name medicines but at a lower cost. Below are answers to some common questions about generic medicines.

#### **What is a generic medicine?**

There are two types of generic medicines available. A *generic equivalent* is identical to a brand-name medicine in the following ways:

- Active ingredient
- Dosage
- Safety
- Strength
- Quality
- How it works
- The way it is taken
- How it is used

Unfortunately, not all brand-name medicines have a matching generic equivalent available. But most brand-name medicines have *generic alternatives*. Generic alternatives work in a similar way and are usually used to treat the same condition(s) as brand-name medicines.

#### **Are generic medicines safe? Do they work as well as brand-name medicines?**

Yes. Generic medicines are required by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to have the same high quality, strength, potency, purity and stability as brand-name medicines. Generic medicine manufacturers must show that their products work as well as the brand-name medicines. Many generic medicines are made in the same manufacturing plants as brand-name medicines.

## **Why should I use generic medicines?**

Many people prefer generic medicines because they can save money. Generic medicines have the same benefits and are held to the same high standards as the brand-name medicines. They cost less to make and can lower your prescription medicine costs.

## **What can I do if my brand-name medicine does not have a generic equivalent?**

Ask your doctor if you can take a generic alternative that works in a similar way. These medicines may not have the same active ingredient as the brand-name medicine you are taking now. But they can work just as well.

## **How can I start saving on my prescription medicine costs?**

Ask your doctor or pharmacist for a generic medicine every time you fill a prescription. You may be able to lower your prescription medicine costs by using generic medicines.

To learn more about generics, you can contact the FDA's Office of Generic Drugs:

Phone: **1-240-402-7920**

Email: [genericdrugs@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:genericdrugs@fda.hhs.gov)

Website: <http://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/CentersOffices/OfficeofMedicalProductsandTobacco/CDER/ucm119100.htm>

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<sup>1</sup>Generic drugs: questions and answers. FDA website. <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/QuestionsAnswers/ucm100100.htm> Updated August 24, 2017. Accessed September 13, 2017.

<sup>2</sup>Facts about Generic Drugs. FDA website. <http://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforyou/consumers/buyingusingmedicinesafely/understandinggenericdrugs/ucm167991.htm> Updated August 31, 2017. Accessed September 13, 2017.

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