

Facts About Generic Drugs

What are generic drugs?

A generic drug is a drug made of the same active ingredients as a brand drug. It must match the brand drug in dosage, safety, strength, how it is taken, quality, intended use and how it works in the body.

Are generics as safe and effective as brand drugs?

Yes. All generic drugs are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for their safety and effectiveness.

To gain approval, generic drugs must:

- Have the same active ingredients as the brand drug
- Be identical in strength, dosage and how it is taken
- Have the same conditions of use
- Produce the same effects in the body
- Meet the same standards for identity, strength, purity and quality
- Be manufactured under the same strict FDA standards of good manufacturing practices.

Why do Generic Drugs look different than brand drugs?

Trademark laws require generic drugs to look different than the brand drug. Although they look different, generic drugs must have the same active ingredients. Inactive ingredients—added to give the medication a certain color, flavor or size—may be different, but cannot affect the way the drug works.

Why do brand drugs cost more than generic drugs?

You can save money by choosing a generic. Your pharmacy benefit offers generics for a smaller copay, which means you pay less at the pharmacy. Using generic drugs not only saves you money when you buy the drug, but it also helps keep your benefit plan's overall costs down. This can result in lower costs for your health benefit in the future.

How can I get a generic drug?

If you are prescribed a brand drug, ask your doctor or pharmacist if a generic drug is available. While it may not be an option for everyone, talk with your doctor to determine if a generic drug is appropriate for you.