

S U M M A R Y

A medicine can have two names:

(1) Generic and (2) Brand.

Generic medicines are of the same quality as branded medicines, but are usually better value for NHS money.

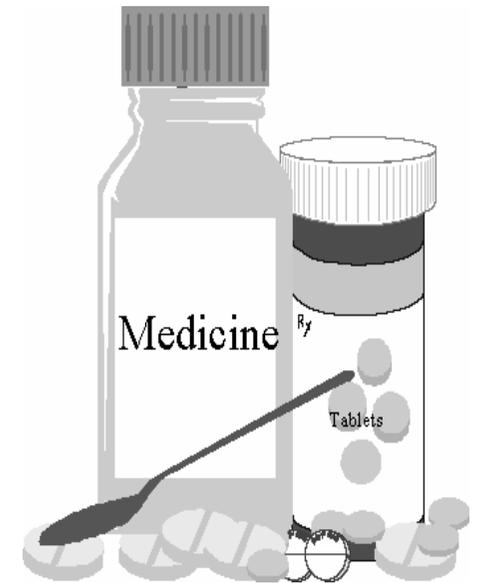
Generic medicines may look different but will always contain the same *active drug ingredient*.

Generic medicines are equally as safe as their branded alternatives and will produce the same clinical effect.

NHS money can be saved using generic medicines. These savings can be used elsewhere in the NHS to benefit you and other patients.

Always discuss any concerns you may have about your medication with your Pharmacist or Doctor.

Patient's Guide to Generic Medicines



- The NHS provides patients with all the medication they genuinely need.
- The NHS drugs bill is growing rapidly.
- We all have a responsibility in supporting the best use of limited NHS financial resources.

WHAT ARE 'GENERIC MEDICINES'?

When a drug is developed, it is given an official or generic drug name. The generic name is the official name (i.e. the name of the active ingredient). All drugs have a generic name and some may also have a brand name.

For example, "paracetamol" is the generic name for a widely used pain killer. "Calpol" or "Panadol" are the brand names that some companies give to their own brands of paracetamol.

Generic medicines are usually less expensive than branded medicines.

ARE GENERIC MEDICINES AS GOOD AS BRANDED MEDICINES?

Generic medicines contain the same *active drug ingredient* as their branded equivalents. The manufacturers who produce generic medicines are subject to the same high standards of quality control as companies who make branded products.

WHY DO GENERIC MEDICINES LOOK DIFFERENT?

Generic medicines may look different from their equivalent branded products. They may differ in colour, shape, size, and taste. The packaging may also differ i.e. loose or blister packed tablets, different coloured boxes, etc.

Manufacturers of branded medicines often make these differences so that their own products can be uniquely identified and marketed.

DO NOT BE WORRIED IF YOUR MEDICINE HAS A DIFFERENT APPEARANCE, IT MAY SIMPLY MEAN THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SUPPLIED A 'GENERIC MEDICINE.'

HOWEVER, IF AT ALL IN DOUBT ABOUT THE MEDICINES YOU HAVE BEEN SUPPLIED - DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK YOUR PHARMACIST.

WHY PRESCRIBE GENERICALLY?

Generic prescribing by your Doctor is a more cost effective of limited NHS funds - it is better value for money. It can save the NHS millions of pounds, allowing more money to be spent in other areas of the NHS.

Use of a medicine's generic name is also good prescribing practice. Your dispensed medicine will then also be labelled by its generic name. The name on the pharmacy label will then be a reminder to you of the official active ingredient name of the drug that you are taking.

WHY NOT ALWAYS PRESCRIBE GENERICALLY?

There are a few drugs that are specially formulated in such a way that different manufacturer's brands can produce a slightly different clinical effect. Your Doctor and Pharmacist will know which drugs these are and will prescribe and dispense them by brand name.

It is useful for you to also know if any of the drugs you take are in this category.