

Patient information

Generic and branded medicines

A guide for patients

This leaflet will help you understand more about generic and branded medicines, but if you have any questions please ask your pharmacist, nurse or doctor.

You have been switched to a generic brand of

..... *[INSERT NAME HERE]*

You have been given this leaflet as you are currently being treated with a medicine called *[INSERT NAME HERE]*

Previously, there was only one manufacturer making this medicine and they called their brand
..... *[INSERT NAME HERE]*

After an agreed number of years, other companies are allowed to produce their own
..... *[INSERT NAME HERE]*

Why the same medicines can have different names

The names of medicines can often be confusing, as the same medicine can sometimes be called different things. Many medicines have two names:

- **the brand name:** this is given to a medicine by the pharmaceutical company it is developed by
- **the scientific or generic name:** named for the active ingredient of the medicine, which is decided by an expert committee

When a company develops a new medicine, they are given a period of time when they are the only supplier of the medicine and are able to price the medicine so that

they can recover the development costs and make sufficient profit to re-invest in future medicines, as well as producing a return for shareholders.

After this period, other companies are allowed to make generic versions, which creates competition and often leads to a large drop in price.

In the UK there are strict quality controls before a product can be made available. Generic medicines go through the same detailed safety and quality requirements as the original branded product so you can be assured that both medicines have the same active ingredient and the same clinical effect.

Prescribing of generic medicines

Prescribers (people who prescribe medicines, such as consultants or GPs) are encouraged to prescribe medicines by their generic name. This is because generic medicines are as effective as the branded versions, but can cost up to 95% less.

The money saved by prescribing non-branded medicines allows the NHS to use funds more effectively and can be used to fund a wider range of treatments for a greater number of people.

As part of the NHS Constitution the NHS as a whole has a responsibility to use its public funds in a way which provides the best value for money and the most effective, fair and sustainable use of finite resources. This means that where possible medicines will be prescribed as generic versions.

Point to remember

- ✓ Money wasted means less is available for other patient services.
- ✓ Making changes to your medicines does not mean that you are receiving a reduced quality service.
- ✓ If you have a leaflet or a letter which gives information about the changes to your medicines, read it carefully and keep it for reference.
- ✓ Always follow the directions printed on the medicine label.

For more information

There are several resources you can use if you have any questions about your medicines or require more information. The following websites may be helpful:

NHS Medicines Guides (www.nhs.uk/medicines-guides)

NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk)

NHS Direct (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

EMC (Electronic Medicines Compendium) Medicines Guides
(www.medicines.org.uk/guides)

West Suffolk Hospital Medicines Information Helpline on 01284 713109; Monday to Friday 9.00am to 2.00pm.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



© West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust