

IS THERE A GENERIC FOR THAT?

Six simple, money-saving words

When it comes to shopping, most consumers want to know the price of a product and will often look for the best deal before making a purchase. That's not always the case when buying prescription drugs, which means many people are paying more than they should for their medications.

One way to save money on prescriptions is to ask for a generic, which typically costs less because the manufacturer did not have to conduct the initial research or repeat the studies that the first-to-market branded drug did. Generics fall into two categories:

- Direct chemical equivalent: a drug that has the same active ingredient as its brand-name counterpart
- Therapeutic alternative: a drug that may not be chemically equivalent to the brand, but has the same therapeutic or treatment effect

Think of it this way: direct chemical equivalents are practically identical to the branded product, while therapeutic alternatives are part of the same family.

SAFETY FIRST

The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) requires generic-drug manufacturers to adhere to strict guidelines, ensuring the safety and effectiveness of all approved generics. In 2017, the FDA approved more generic drugs than ever before, including the first generic versions of commonly used brands like Strattera®, Truvada®, Coreg CR® and Vytorin®.*

Furthermore, our pharmacy benefit manager, Express Scripts, protects their supply of drugs from substandard manufacturing practices and counterfeit products. Their pharmacies only dispense medications that are manufactured according to the FDA's strict standards, which provide guidance for manufacturing, testing and quality assurance to ensure product safety.

“A generic medicine works in the same way and provides the same clinical benefit as its brand-name version. This standard applies to all FDA-approved generic medicines. A generic medicine is the same as a brand-name medicine in dosage, safety, effectiveness, strength, stability, and quality, as well as in the way it is taken and should be used.”

— U.S. Food & Drug Administration

Here are some other six-word phrases to help keep money-saving generics top-of-mind:

Check it out during your checkup: Before leaving a doctor's office with prescription in hand, be sure to ask the doctor or nurse, “Is there a generic for that?”

Give your prescriptions a quick checkup: Review all of your medications regularly with a doctor or pharmacist, because there may be new, lower-cost treatments available.

Ask about generics before you fill: When you hand over a new prescription to your pharmacist, or during refill or renewal time, ask, “Is there a generic for that?” The pharmacist can tell you and then call your doctor to discuss changing the prescription accordingly.

Get the most from your dollars: You can learn more about your specific generics savings opportunities by going to express-scripts.com and reviewing your prescriptions.

Get the facts from the FDA: Learn more about the benefits of generic drugs and the policies guiding their development from fda.gov.

* Office of Generic Drugs (OGD) Annual Report for 2017