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Count on GENERICS

Safe and Effective. Better Value.®

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You just dropped a prescription off at your pharmacy and the person behind the counter asks you, "Is it all right to substitute this prescription medicine for the generic equivalent?" What do you say? What should you do?

No need to panic. The best thing you can do is to know the facts before you are in that situation. You may have questions about generics, but this is all you really need to know: **Generic medicines are proven to be safe and effective by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) before they can be sold.**

What is the difference between a generic and a brand name medicine?

The short answer is, "All the money you save." The only real difference is just the name and price – **and generics cost less.**

A brand name drug is a new drug that is discovered to treat a medical condition, undergoing research and development, then FDA review and approval to bring the new and original medicine to market. Once a brand name pharmaceutical manufacturer has discovered a chemical that has potential to become a new medicine, they will usually get a patent for the medicine and its brand name. Most drug patents are generally protected for 20 years. The patent protects the company that first makes the drug. The patent doesn't allow anyone else to make and sell the drug. When the patent finally expires, other drug companies can start selling the generic version of the drug. But first, they must test the drug and the FDA must approve it.

The FDA says that all drugs must work well and be safe. Generic drugs use the same active ingredients as brand name drugs and work the same way. FDA puts all generic drugs through a rigorous, multi-step process to ensure they are the therapeutic equivalent of their brand name counterpart. That means a generic drug can be substituted and it will produce the same clinical effect, and meet the same safety profile, as well as other standards, as the brand name drug.

Generic formulations undergo a rigorous FDA approval process

Here are just some of the FDA standards and practices that generic manufacturers must follow:

- A generic medicine must be the *bioequivalent* (performs in the same manner) of its brand name counterpart.
- A generic medicine must pass the FDA's review for both active and inactive ingredients.
- The manufacturing facility of the generic medicine must pass FDA inspection.
- The generic medicine must have the same active ingredients and be available in the same strength and dosage form as its brand name counterpart.
- The label of the generic medicine must include the same information found on the packaging of its brand name counterpart.
- Finally, the FDA continues to monitor the generic drug for quality control after it has been approved.¹

The FDA ensures your generic medicine is safe and effective *before* it goes to market. In most cases, the average person cannot tell the difference between a generic and a brand name drug, other than its size, color or shape. They look different because trademark laws in the U.S. do not allow a generic drug to look exactly like other drugs already on the market.

So, what do you do?

Back to the scene in the pharmacy. The person behind the counter is waiting for your answer. What should you say?

You know the generic medicine is safe and effective. If you want to save an average of 30% to 80%* on your prescription, you'll say, "YES!"

The best thing about generics is how much money you can save. In our pharmacy benefit plan, we pay the lowest co-pay/cost share whenever we fill a prescription with a generic. And remember, you're not sacrificing a thing. You can *Count on Generics* for brand name quality at a lower cost.

To find out whether a prescription drug is available in a generic form or to determine the FDA status of a generic drug, visit: <http://www.fda.gov/cder/ogd/>.

To learn more about generics and how they impact your health and financial well-being, visit Caremark at www.caremark.com/countongenerics.

1. www.fda.gov

*The amount of your savings will be based on your benefit plan. Source: Generic Pharmaceutical Association's Web site: www.gphaonline.org

