



## The Scoop on Generics

When you pick up your next prescription, you may be told a generic equivalent was substituted for the brand name drug. You may ask yourself, "What exactly is a generic?" and "Is this just as good as the brand?" A "generic" is a medication that has the same active ingredient as the brand name drug, but costs less. With patents on brand name drugs expiring every year, the number of generics on the market will keep increasing. This means savings for you! Understanding the facts about these medications is important, as there are many misconceptions about them.

expenses by controlling the market for that specific drug over a set amount of time. Once the patent of the brand name drug has expired, other manufacturers are allowed to enter the market with their generic product. Because these manufacturers can skip the research step and move right into manufacturing, they realize significant savings that they pass on to the patient. In addition, the added competition between generic manufacturers further drives down the price.

### What are generics?

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), generic drugs have the same active ingredient(s); dosage form (pill, cream, etc.); method of administration; and overall effect as the brand name drug. Brand name drug companies are awarded a patent for their new idea by the U.S. Patent office. Having the patent means the company is the only one allowed to make and market that specific drug while the patent is active. When the patent for the brand name drug expires, other drug companies can make and sell the generic version of the brand name drug.

### Are there any differences between brand name and generic drugs?

Generics may look different than brand name drugs, but they still contain the same active ingredient. There can be very small differences in the amount of active ingredient, but the FDA puts limits on the variations. This small difference is not enough to cause a different effect in the body. Consider baking a batch of cookies. You can follow a recipe closely, but not every cookie will look exactly the same even though they taste the same.

The FDA has indicated that certain drugs called "narrow therapeutic index drugs" (i.e. phenytoin, warfarin, digoxin, cyclosporine, zidovudine, lithium carbonate, and theophylline) require as little variance as possible to get the best effects from them. Just a small difference in the amount of active ingredient can change how these drugs work in your body. If you are

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## How a Generic Drug Comes to Market



Brand Manufacturer

Generic Manufacturers

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taking a narrow therapeutic index drug, do not switch between manufacturers.

### How do I get generics prescribed to me?

Your doctor can determine whether or not a generic can be substituted for the brand name drug. Be sure to ask your pharmacist if a generic product has been substituted for the brand name drug when they fill your prescription.

### What if my generic drugs look different from the last time I picked them up?

More than likely your prescription was filled with the same generic drug but from a different generic drug manufacturer. These generic products will have the same active ingredient, but the appearance of the medication itself may vary from manufacturer to manufacturer. Always look at the contents of the bottle before leaving

the pharmacy and talk to your pharmacist if your refill medicine looks different.

### I have seen some pharmacies advertise \$4 generics. Are all generic drugs on this list?

No. Although a brand name drug may have a generic, it does not guarantee that the generic will be \$4. Check out your pharmacy's specific conditions for more information on what is on this list.

In summary, generics are acceptable alternatives to brand name drugs. They contain the same active ingredient and meet standards set by the FDA to ensure that the overall effect of the drug is the same as the brand. They can also save you money! So the next time you go to the pharmacy, take the time to look at your medication and talk to your pharmacist if you have any questions regarding the generic that you are picking up.

## New Generic Approvals for 2011-2012

*The following brands are expected to have generic equivalents available within the next twelve months. Talk to your doctor about switching from brand to generic if you currently take one of these medications.*

| Brand Name (Manufacturer)      | Generic Name                   | Date Available | Brand Name (Manufacturer)          | Generic Name                                    | Date Available |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Zyprexa (Lilly)                | Olanzapine                     | Oct. 2011      | Viagra (Pfizer)                    | Sildenafil                                      | Mar. 2012      |
| Lipitor (Pfizer)               | Atorvastatin                   | Nov. 2011      | Seroquel/Seroquel XR (AstraZeneca) | Quetiapine/Quetiapine extended release tablet   | Mar. 2012      |
| Lunesta (Sepracor)             | Eszopiclone                    | Jan. 2012      | Lescol/Lescol XL (Novartis)        | Fluvastatin/Fluvastatin extended release tablet | Apr. 2012      |
| Entocort EC (AstraZeneca)      | Budesonide Capsule             | Feb. 2012      | Plavix (Sanofi-Aventis)            | Clopidogrel                                     | May 2012       |
| Avalide (Bristol-Myers Squibb) | Irbesartan/Hydrochlorothiazide | Mar. 2012      | Clarinx (Schering)                 | Desloratadine                                   | Jul. 2012      |
| Avandamet (GlaxoSmithKline)    | Metformin/Rosiglitazone        | Mar. 2012      | Singulair (Merck)                  | Montelukast                                     | Aug. 2012      |
| Avandaryl (GlaxoSmithKline)    | Rosiglitazone/Glimepiride      | Mar. 2012      | Detrol (Pfizer)                    | Tolterodine                                     | Sep. 2012      |
| Avapro (Bristol-Myers Squibb)  | Irbesartan                     | Mar. 2012      | Diovan (Novartis)                  | Valsartan                                       | Sep. 2012      |
| Boniva (Roche)                 | Ibandronate                    | Mar. 2012      | Diovan HCT (Novartis)              | Valsartan/HCTZ                                  | Sep. 2012      |
| Geodon (Pfizer)                | Ziprasidone                    | Mar. 2012      | Exforge (Novartis)                 | Amlodipine/Valsartan                            | Sep. 2012      |
| Lexapro (Forest)               | Escitalopram                   | Mar. 2012      | Opana ER (Endo)                    | Oxymorphone extended release tablet             | Sep. 2012      |

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