

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions About Generic Drugs



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1. What are generic drugs?

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), a generic drug works the same as a brand-name drug. It has the same active ingredients, and you take it the same way. The FDA looks at generic drugs to make sure they are just as safe as name brand drugs and they work just as well. *(Source: FDA)*

2. Are generic drugs as safe as brand-name drugs?

Yes. The FDA makes sure that all drugs are safe and that they work right. Generics use the same active ingredients and work the same way in the body. They have the same risks and benefits as brand-name drugs. *(Source: FDA)*

3. Are generic drugs as strong as brand-name drugs?

Yes. The FDA makes sure that generic drugs are just as strong and work the same way as brand-name drugs. *(Source: FDA)*

4. How do doctors feel about generic drugs?

The American Medical Association, the largest association of medical doctors, says that generic drugs can be used. Most hospitals use generic drugs for treatment of their patients. *(Source: FDA)*

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5. Do generic drugs take longer to work in the body?

No. Generic drugs are made to work in the same way and in the same amount of time as brand-name drugs. (Source: FDA)

6. Why are generic drugs less expensive?

Generic drugs are less expensive (usually 30-75 percent less, according to the Generic Pharmaceutical Association) because they don't cost as much to make. Drug makers also do not need to spend a lot of money to advertise generic drugs. There are more generic drug choices which keeps the price down. Today, almost half of all prescriptions are filled with generic drugs, according to the FDA. (Source: FDA)

7. Why does it take so long for a generic drug to become available?

Manufacturers of brand-name drugs spend a lot of time and money to research and develop a new drug. They protect brand-name drugs with a patent. Other companies cannot make or sell the same drug as a generic until the patent expires, which may take up to 20 years. (Source: FDA)

8. Are brand-name drugs made in more modern facilities than generic drugs?

No. Both brand-name and generic drugs are made the same way. The FDA inspects all places where drugs are made to make sure they are safe and clean. Many companies that make brand-name drugs also make generic drugs. (Source: FDA)

9. If brand-name drugs and generic drugs have the same active ingredients, why do they look different?

In the United States, two drugs cannot look exactly the same. Even though generic and brand-name drugs have the same active ingredients, they may have different shapes, colors, and flavors. (Source: FDA)

10. Are the non-active ingredients in generic medicines as good as those in brand-name drugs?

Everything that goes into a medicine must be approved by the FDA. A generic drug has the same active ingredients as the name-brand drug. But because no two drugs can be exactly the same, the non-active ingredients will be different. Non-active ingredients do not change how well a drug will work. (Source: Generics Pharmaceutical Association)

11. Does every brand-name drug have a generic version?

No. Brand-name drugs are protected under a patent for as long as 20 years because companies that make new drugs spend a lot of time and money on research and marketing. When the patent expires, other drug companies can start making generic versions, but only after they have been tested and approved by the FDA. (Source: FDA)

12. What is the best source of information about generic drugs?

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about generic drugs. You can also visit the FDA website at www.fda.gov for more information. (Source: FDA)

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