

Generic Drugs

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are generic drugs?

Generic drugs are drugs that can be used in place of brand name drugs because the same ingredients are available in the same strength and dosage. They are Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved and almost always cost less than the brand name drug.



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

Yes. According to the FDA, generic drugs are just as safe and effective as brand-name drugs. They will work the same way in the body as their brand-name counterpart. With generics you receive the same quality as brand-name, with lower cost.

3. Why do brand-name and generic drugs look different?

They look different because the generic companies make the pills in different shapes and colors. Nevertheless, the active chemical ingredients, which make the drug work are identical.

4. How can generic drugs be less expensive?

According to the Congressional Budget Office, "Generic drugs save consumers an estimated \$8 to \$10 billion a year at retail pharmacies." When a brand-name drug comes off patent other drug manufacturers can make and market the drug with the same chemical ingredients. Generic drugs are identical, or bioequivalent to a brand name drug in dosage form, safety, strength, route of administration, quality, performance characteristics and intended use. Although generic drugs are chemically identical to their branded counterparts, they are typically sold at substantial discounts from the branded price. (Source: FDA Office of Generic Drugs.)

5. Is there a source for information about generic drugs?

The FDA provides full information about every approved drug on its web site, including what a drug is used for, side effects and any warnings. The information can be found at:

www.fda.gov/drugs/default.htm

CSEA Health Benefits Department

