

Generic drugs: Good for your wallet and your health

You probably know that generic prescription drugs cost less, but do you use them? If not, some common misconceptions may be to blame. Generics offer a safe and effective alternative to brand name medications. Take a look at these myths and facts, then talk with your doctor to find out if a generic medication may be right for you.

Myth: *Generics don't work as well as brand name drugs.*

Fact: The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires that generic and brand name products contain the exact same active ingredients and provide a similar amount in the body.

Several manufacturers may produce similar generic products for one brand name medication. Harvard Pilgrim selects only those generics with the highest quality as rated by the FDA.

Myth: *Generic drugs don't look the same as brand medications. They must have cheaper ingredients.*

Fact: Legally, generic drugs must look different from the brand name products so consumers can easily tell them apart. The active ingredients in brand name and generic versions of a medication are the same. According to FDA requirements, generics must be:

- Available in the same dosage form and potency
- Demonstrated as safe and effective
- Manufactured under government-approved good manufacturing practices

Myth: *Generics have inactive ingredients that may cause allergic reactions.*

Fact: Allergic reactions to inactive ingredients are rare, and many drug manufacturers use the same fillers and dyes in both brand and generic drugs. If an allergic reaction occurs with a brand or a generic medication, contact your physician immediately.

Myth: *Generics cost less because they are low quality.*

Fact: Bringing brand-name drugs to market is costly. Generic manufacturers don't have to spend as much money on drug research, development and advertising. Competition among manufacturers of generic drugs also drives down prices.

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The prescription for all your RX needs!

Visit www.harvardpilgrim.org for helpful prescription drug information and services. Go to the "For Members" section and click on "Pharmacy" to:

- Use the Drug Lookup feature for detailed drug information, including precautions and side effects.
- Get details on Harvard Pilgrim's three-tier prescription drug program, including an extensive list of covered medications and lower-cost alternatives for brand medications.
- Order your prescriptions and save on over-the-counter health and beauty aids at our Online Drugstore. Your order is delivered right to your door!

If you don't have Internet access and you're a Harvard Pilgrim member, call us at **1-888-333-4742**. Representatives are available 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Mondays and Wednesdays; 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. If you are deaf or hard-of-hearing, please call 1-800-637-8257 for TDD service.



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