



Brand vs. Generic

How do they compare?

Switching to a generic medication will save you money, but how do generic medications compare to their brand name counterparts?

- All generic drugs are reviewed and approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Generic drugs have the same active ingredients as the brand name drug.
- Generic drugs are manufactured to the same standards as brand name medications.
- Generic drugs are required to deliver the same amount of active ingredient, in the same amount of time as brand name drugs.
- Generic drugs are usually much less expensive than the brand name counterpart.

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Getting a medication approved by the FDA is a lengthy process. Research, development and careful testing prior to receiving approval for the medication is expensive for the pharmaceutical companies. For their efforts, they are awarded patents on the new medications which give them the exclusive right to produce and market the medications.

Once the patent expires, usually seven years, the medication can then be produced generically. The company producing the generics (sometimes the same one who formerly held the patent) must prove to the FDA that the medication is "bioequivalent" to the brand name medication. This means the generic medication will be absorbed equally, will have the same desired effects, and will not cause any different side effects.

Not all drugs have a generic equivalent. Your pharmacist or doctor can tell you if there is a generic version of the medication you are taking, or if there is medication in the same family of drugs that has a generic.

For more information on medication go to www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo.