

Choose Generics

Save money by choosing quality, cost-effective alternatives to brand medications

As your prescription benefits manager, Magellan Rx Management is dedicated to giving you the best information and resources to help you make better healthcare decisions. Selecting generic medications is one way to help control your health care costs without sacrificing safety and effectiveness. The following are answers to commonly asked questions about generic drugs.

What are generic drugs?

Generic drugs are important options that allow greater access to health care for all Americans. They are copies of brand-name drugs and are the same as those brand-name drugs 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. Generic manufacturers are able to sell their products for lower prices because they are not required to repeat the costly clinical trials of new drugs and generally do not pay for costly advertising, marketing, and promotion. In addition, multiple generic companies are often approved to market a single product; this creates competition in the market place, often resulting in lower prices.

Do generics work just as well as brand-name drugs?

A study evaluated the results of 38 published clinical trials that compared cardiovascular generic drugs to their brand-name counterparts. There was no evidence that brand-name heart drugs worked any better than generic heart drugs.



Are generic drugs as effective as brand-name drugs?

Yes. A generic drug is the same as a brand-name drug in dosage, safety, strength, quality, the way it works, the way it is taken and the way it should be used. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires generic drugs have the same high quality, strength, purity and stability as brand-name drugs.

Not every brand-name drug has a generic drug. When new drugs are first made they have drug patents. Most drug patents are protected for 20 years. The patent, which protects the company that made the drug first, doesn't allow anyone else to make and sell the drug. When the patent expires, other drug companies can start selling a generic version of the drug. But first, they must test the drug and the FDA must approve it.

Creating a new drug is expensive. Since generic drug makers do not develop a drug from scratch, the costs to bring the drug to market are less; therefore, generic drugs are usually less expensive than brand-name drugs. However, generic drug makers must show that their product performs in the same way as the brand-name drug.

What standards do generic drugs have to meet?

Health professionals and consumers can be assured that FDA-approved generic drugs have met the same rigid standards as the innovator drug. To gain FDA approval, a generic drug must:

- Contain the same active ingredients as the innovator drug (inactive ingredients may vary)
- Be identical in strength, dosage form, and route of administration
- Have the same use indications
- Be bioequivalent
- Meet the same batch requirements for identity, strength, purity, and quality
- Be manufactured under the same strict standards of FDA's good manufacturing practice regulations required for innovator products

What if I prefer to take a brand-name drug?

To encourage the use of generic drugs, your plan may require that you pay the difference in cost if you choose to take a brand-name prescription medication when a generic version of the same drug is available.

- If your doctor advises you to take a brand over generic, then you may not have to pay the difference, depending on your plan.
- If you elect a brand over a generic *without* your doctor's consent, you must pay the difference between the brand and generic drug.
- If there is no generic equivalent, you may receive the brand drug with no penalty.

Is there a generic equivalent for my brand-name drug?

To find out if there is a generic equivalent for your brand-name drug, please visit our website at magellanrx.com.

