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## Generic Medications

### Introduction to generic drugs

Have you ever wondered what the differences are between brand and generic drugs, how the same medication can have two different names, or why one of your prescription drugs looks different than the last time you had it filled? Here's a brief introduction to generic drugs to help you understand the answers to these questions.

❖ **What are generic drugs?**

Generic drugs are the same as brand-name drugs in terms of active ingredients, dosage, safety, strength, quality, the way they work, and the way they're taken. However, they may look, taste, or smell different, or they may come in different packaging than brand-name drugs. Also, since more than one manufacturer might make a particular generic drug, the color, shape, or size of the pill can be different depending on who made the drug.

❖ **Are all brand-name drugs available as generics?**

No. New drugs have patents when they are first made. These patents usually last for 20 years, and they are held by the company that made the drug. This means that no other company can make a generic version of the drug until the patent expires and the FDA approves it. When the patent expires, the brand-name drug will still be known by the brand name, but the generic versions must be labeled by the generic name.

❖ **Why do generic drugs cost less than brand-name drugs?**

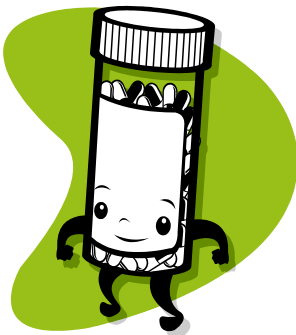
Creating a new drug is an expensive process. Since generic drug makers do not develop a drug from scratch, it costs them less to bring the drug to market. Also, generic drug companies spend less money on advertising their product. These savings are passed along to you in the form of lower prices.

❖ **How do generic drugs come to market?**

Generic drugs are approved by the FDA through an Abbreviated New Drug Application (ANDA) process. This requires the manufacturer of a generic drug to show that its medication is the same as the brand-name drug in quality, strength, and the way it works. The "sameness" is called bioequivalence.

❖ **Are generics "cheaper" than brand drugs?**

No. Generic drugs are not "cheaper" or of lesser quality than brand drugs. Instead, generics are available at low or no cost, and this helps to lower a patient's monthly prescription costs. If a patient cannot afford to take the medication as prescribed, they may decide to skip doses in hope of extending their supply. Since generics are more affordable, they can help prevent potential harm from any skipped or altered dosage regimens.



### Did you know?

New generic drugs get approved by the FDA all the time

Brand-name drugs are not higher in quality or purity than generic drugs

Generic drugs cost 80 to 85% less than brand-name drugs

Generics are as safe and effective as brand-name drugs but cost less

Roughly 75% of prescriptions dispensed in 2009 were generic




You pay \$0 for generics at MHN Preferred Network Pharmacies

**Brand versus generic: How different are they?**

In clinical trials that were done to compare generic drugs for treating heart disease to the brand-name versions, the FDA found no proof that “brand-name heart drugs worked any better than generic heart drugs.” Although generics cost less than brands, their safety and effectiveness are equal to the brand. In fact, the FDA requires that generics have the same active ingredients, intended uses, strengths, and dosage forms as the brands.



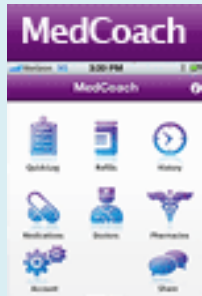
**Now that you know more about generics . . .**

Not sure what to do with what you’ve learned about generic drugs? This chart offers some suggestions to put your new knowledge to work so you get the biggest benefit for your health and save money at the same time.

	<p>At your doctor’s office, ask if generics are available and can be substituted for your brand-name drugs. You can also use an app on your phone to search for the drugs you’re taking so you can be prepared for your appointment.</p>
	<p>At your pharmacy, ask if the medication you’re receiving is generic. Often, state law will allow the pharmacist to dispense a generic unless your doctor has written “brand medically necessary” on the prescription.</p>
	<p>At home, take your medications as prescribed and complete any necessary follow-up testing. These actions can prevent disease progression and complications, which can be expensive.</p>

**Could you use some help managing your medications?**

If you answered yes to this question, you are not alone. Many patients have trouble remembering to take their medications or have questions about them that they don’t know how to answer. If you have a mobile device, you might find it helpful to download a medication app. Some medication apps are only for looking up drug information, but others will allow you to track doses taken, request refills from your pharmacy, and set reminders for yourself and your family. This chart provides a summary of four medication apps that are free to download.

App	Generic Drugs	Pillbox	MedCoach
Maker	TechMind	Community Health Network	GreatCall
Devices	Android	iPhone, iPod touch	iPhone, iPod touch, iPad
Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lists FDA-approved generic drugs</li> <li>- Search by brand name or active ingredient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manage family’s medication lists and scheduled doses</li> <li>- Drugs are linked to an informative database</li> <li>- Doctors can be linked to each patient’s profile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reminders to take medications</li> <li>- Tracking of doses</li> <li>- Refill requests to pharmacy</li> <li>- Wide range of help features</li> </ul>
Images			



Manatee County Government’s Center for Health & Lifestyle Management \* [www.ManateeYourChoice.com](http://www.ManateeYourChoice.com)

**Manatee Health Disclaimer**

The information in this newsletter is not a substitute for medical advice. It is for reference only and should not be used to determine treatment for your specific medical conditions-only a health care provider can do this. You should seek prompt medical care for any specific health issues and consult you physician regarding the use of over-the-counter products to treat any medical condition or consult your physician regarding the use of prescription or over-the-counter products to treat any medical condition or before starting any new diet, fitness, or supplement regimen.

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