

Generics– All the Benefits for Significantly Less

You may have heard about generic prescriptions. Many people are talking about them, and with good reason. Generic prescription drugs are as much as 80% less money for patients than brand name drugs. Last year, over 60 percent of prescriptions filled in the U.S. were generic drugs. If Americans use generic drugs, billions of dollars can be saved on healthcare spending.

What exactly is a generic drug?

A generic drug is a copy of a brand name drug that is the same in dosage, safety, strength, how it is taken, quality, performance, and intended use. In other words, they are the same in about every way except price.



Are generic drugs safe?

Generic drugs are required to meet all of the same quality standards and requirements as brand name drugs. The facilities that make generic drugs are similar in quality to brand name facilities, and are regularly inspected. In fact, almost half of all generic drugs are made by the same company as the brand name version! Generic drugs are endorsed both effective and safe by the American Medical Association and FDA.



Why are generic drugs less expensive than brand names?

Companies that make brand name drugs have to pay to research, perfect, and market their drug. When their patent expires, other companies are allowed to use the active ingredients to make generic versions. Companies that make generic drugs do not have to pay for any of the research, development, or marketing, so they can charge less money.

How do I know if a generic version of my medication is available?

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if a generic version is available. However, if your doctor has written “D.A.W” (Dispense As Written) on the prescription, it must be filled as the doctor specifies. You can also visit the state-run website, www.michigandrugprices.com to search generics and their prices.



What else can I do to save money with generics?

- Always show your insurance prescription card when filling prescriptions.
- Look into whether or not your insurance plan has either a mail order prescription or a generic prescription program.
- Your insurance co-pay is often lower for generics than for brand names.
- Shop around for the best prices on your medications. Under Michigan law, you can be given the price of a prescription before it is filled. Feel free to compare against other pharmacies.
- Some large chains have begun offering hundreds of generics at very low prices. There are programs that offer a month's supply of many generics for as little as \$4 per script.

For more information about generics, visit www.fda.gov/cder/ogd/index.htm