



Generic medication

Same quality, better price.

We offer many generic options to help keep your medication as affordable as possible.

Generic medications work just like brand-name equals.

A generic has the same active ingredients, strength and dosage as its brand-name equal. It provides the same quality and performance. Generics don't have high development costs.¹ That's why they cost you less.

Generics are safe.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires generics to be as safe and effective as brand-name equals. Both types of medication must meet the same FDA standards.¹

Here's how to save with generics.

Current prescriptions: Ask your provider or pharmacist if you can replace your brand-name medication with a generic.

New prescriptions: Ask your provider if there's a generic option.



Nearly 9 out of 10
CVS Caremark®
prescriptions are
for generics²

For savings opportunities and personalized support,
visit **Caremark.com** (after your benefits begin).

¹ <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/buying-using-medicine-safely/generic-drugs>.

² CVS Health Book of Business, Funded Clients, January – June 2019. Provided by Enterprise Analytics, November 2019.

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Generic Medication FAQ

What is the difference between brand and generic medications?

The original developer of the medication generally manufactures the brand-name product. A manufacturer that did not originally produce the medication generally produces a generic version. All the active ingredients in both versions are the same and generics are safe and effective. However, generic drugs typically cost less than brand-name drugs. That's because generic manufacturers do not have the costs associated with the development of brand-name medications, so they can produce them for less. Generic medications must meet U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines before they can be sold.

CVS Caremark also has an approval process to evaluate manufacturers. All manufacturers must meet CVS Caremark standards for us to purchase and dispense their products.

You may also want to consult with your doctor or pharmacist for more information about a particular drug.

Why do generic drugs cost less?

Generic medications are less expensive because generic manufacturers don't have the large investment costs of the original developer. New drugs have a patent that allows the drug to only be sold by that one company. Once the patent expires, other manufacturers can apply to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to sell the generic equivalent. With no investment costs and more competition among the generic manufacturers, the price of generics is less.

Are generic drugs as effective as brand-name drugs?

Yes. The FDA requires generic equivalents to have the same active ingredients, and work in the body the same way as the brand-name drug. The FDA requires generic equivalents to have the same quality, strength, purity and stability as brand drugs.

Why should I change to a generic medication?

The short answer is, because of the money you can save. The average annual member savings with generic medications is \$200-\$360. This is why generic medicines account for 69 percent of all prescriptions dispensed in the United States, yet only 16 percent of all dollars spent on prescriptions. Generics are becoming the medication of choice because they can help save everyone money—the health care system, your employer and, most importantly, you.

What is the difference between generic equivalent and generic alternative medicines?

A generic equivalent contains the same active ingredients, in the very same strength, as a specific brand-name drug. Many brands now have generic equivalents, which are just as safe and effective as brand drugs. However, not all brands have a generic equivalent, in which case there may be a generic alternative medicine that is right for you. A generic alternative medicine is a generic equivalent of a different drug than the one you are taking that may also effectively treat your condition. Since generic medicines are less expensive, you can save money if you are able to take a generic alternative to treat your condition.

Are generic drugs as safe as brand-name drugs?

Yes. The FDA says that all drugs must work well and be safe. Generic medicines may look different in size or color, and their names are different (they are referred to by their chemical names instead of brand names), but the FDA has the same standards for quality and effectiveness as their brand-name counterparts. Generic drug manufacturers have facilities that are FDA-inspected, just like brand-name facilities. The FDA conducts about 3,500 inspections a year to ensure standards are being met.

Still have questions? Visit [Caremark.com](https://www.caremark.com) for more FAQs.