

GENERIC MEDICINES

What are they and why are they used?



Supporting people in Dorset to lead healthier lives

What are generic medicines?

Generic medicines are versions of branded medicines made by other manufacturers.

Drug companies research and produce new medicines. These medicines have a “brand name” (or trade name) and a “generic name” (drug name).

For example, paracetamol is the generic name for a widely used pain killer. “Panadol[®]” is the name one company gives to its own brand of paracetamol.

Are generic medicines as good as branded medicines?

All medicines are produced by companies who are subject to tight controls on quality.

In fact many of the manufacturers of generic medicines are owned by large pharmaceutical companies who make branded products.

Do generic medicines look different?

Generic medicines may look



different from their branded equivalent and other generic forms of the same medicine.

They may differ in colour, shape, size and even taste. However, they will have an identical effect on the body.

Can all medicines be prescribed by generic name?

No. In some cases your doctor may feel it best for you to stick to one branded product and not take the generic equivalent.

An example of this would be when you are taking tablets

and capsules that have special coatings so the medicine acts more slowly in the body.

Why do we use generic medicines?

They are usually less expensive and can save the NHS millions of pounds. Savings made in this simple way can be used to benefit you and other patients with no change in the effectiveness of your treatment.

What should you do if you are worried about a change in the appearance and name of your medicine?

Doctors and pharmacists know which drugs can be safely prescribed and dispensed by generic name. Discuss any worries or concerns with your doctor or pharmacist.

Summary

It is important that we make best use of the money we spend on medicines, without reducing the quality of the treatment patients receive.

If more money is spent on medicines than is available, the extra money has to come from other areas of healthcare. The use of generic medicines can save the NHS millions of pounds.

A medicine has two names:

- a generic name
- a brand name

Generic medicines are NOT inferior to branded medicines.

Generic forms of the same medicine may look different from the brand and each other BUT they are as safe and effective as branded medicines.

Generic medicines usually cost a lot less than their equivalent branded medicine. Making changes to your medicines does not mean that you are receiving a reduced quality service.

Further information

If you have any questions relating to generic medicines, or would like more information, please contact your GP surgery or ask your community pharmacist (chemist).

Alternatively, the NHS choices website at www.nhs.uk has lots of reliable medicines related information

**This leaflet can be made available in other
formats and languages**

To request a different format please contact the
Communications Team

communications@dorsetccg.nhs.uk