



The cost of prescription drugs has skyrocketed - and continues to rise.

Generic drugs are safe, effective, and approved by the FDA. They just cost you less. A lot less. [Ask your doctor or pharmacist if generic drugs are right for you.](#)

These costs affect everyone - whether you are currently taking a prescription drug or not. But there is something you can do about it: choose a generic over a brand name drug.

When you need a prescription, you may be able to cut down on your health care costs by asking your doctor if there is a generic instead of a brand medication that will treat your condition. [Most generic medications are one-quarter the cost of their brand counterparts.](#)

Generic drugs lower your prescription costs without sacrificing quality.

[Today, approximately one-half of all prescriptions in the U.S. are filled with generic drugs. Generics are safe, effective – and they’re FDA approved!](#)

drugs are under patent protection, meaning the manufacturer has the sole right to sell the drug. A generic drug is a copy that is the same as a brand name drug in dosage, safety, strength, how it is taken, quality, performance and intended use but is sold under its chemical or “generic” name.

Are generic drugs as effective as brand name drugs?

The generic drug should treat your illness or condition with the same effectiveness and safety as its brand name equivalent. Generics have to meet the same rigorous U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirements as brand name drugs. The strength and purity of generic medications are strictly regulated by the FDA. All generic manufacturers are required by the FDA to demonstrate that a generic drug will have the same medical effect as its brand name equivalent.

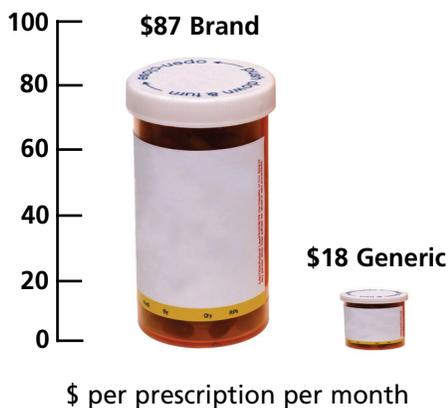
Are generic drugs as safe as brand name drugs?

The FDA requires that all drugs be safe and effective. Since generics use the same active ingredients and are shown to work the same way in the body, they have the same risks and benefits as their brand name counterparts.

Is the more expensive brand name drug of a better quality?

No, the quality is the same. Both have to meet the same rigorous FDA requirements.

Average cost of brand vs. generics



What is the difference between a brand name and generic drug?

A brand name drug is marketed under a specific trade name by the pharmaceutical manufacturer. In most cases, brand name

FDA requirements are the same for brand and generic drugs		
FDA Requirement	Brand	Generic
FDA reviews data showing the drug has the same effect on the body, usually identical in chemical structure to the one originally used in testing safety and effectiveness.	■	■
FDA evaluates good manufacturing practices before the drug is marketed.	■	■
FDA reviews active and inactive ingredients used in the development of the drug before it is marketed.	■	■
FDA reviews actual drug product.	■	■
FDA reviews drug labeling.	■	■
Manufacturer needs FDA approval before making major manufacturing changes or changes to the drug ingredients or make-up.	■	■
Manufacturer must report adverse reactions (side effects) and serious health effects to FDA.	■	■
FDA periodically inspects manufacturing plants.	■	■
FDA monitors drug quality after approval.	■	■

Are generic drugs less expensive than brand name drugs?

In most cases, yes. The cost of researching, developing and marketing a new drug - including the money spent advertising the product - are factored into the price of the brand drug. Generic manufacturers spend considerably less on development and promotion, so they can afford to sell their product for less money. Because generic drugs provide greater value, they usually require a smaller pharmacy benefit co-payment than branded products.

Who makes generic drugs?

Some are manufactured by the same pharmaceutical companies that make brand drugs; others are produced by pharmaceutical companies specializing in the manufacture of generics. All prescription drug manufacturers must meet rigid FDA standards.

Do all drugs have a generic equivalent?

No. Generics are available for many drugs, but not for the newest drugs approved by the FDA. Most new brand name drugs are granted an exclusive patent for a 17-year period. Once the patent expires, other pharmaceutical companies can manufacture a generic ver-

sion, with FDA approval. In a very few instances, a brand name drug may be too unique for a generic version to be produced.

If generic drugs have the same active ingredients as brand name drugs, why do they look different?

U.S. trademark laws do not allow generic drugs to look exactly like the brand name drug. However, the generic drug must have the same active ingredients. Colors, flavors, and certain other parts may be different. These things do not affect the way the drug works.

How do I get a prescription for a generic medication?

Ask your doctor if a generic is available to treat your condition. If there is, be sure to ask the doctor to write your prescription using the drug's generic name. This way you'll be sure to get the generic version when your prescription is filled at the pharmacy.

