

Generic and Brand Name Medicines

Unless it is a new medicine, most prescription and over the counter medicines are sold by brand names and generic names.

The active drug ingredients are the same between the brand name and the generic name medicine according to laws in the United States.

The generic may look or taste different than the brand name medicine, but the generic name medicine must work the same way and just as quickly as the brand name medicine.

The generic and brand name medicines also share the same:

- Dose strength and way it is to be given
- Use, or the reason you take the medicine
- Side effects
- Safety

Generics often cost less than brand name medicines. New medicines or those with very limited use may not be available as generics.

Examples of generic and brand name medicines

- Acetaminophen is the generic name for Tylenol, used for pain and fever.
- Ibuprofen is the generic name for Motrin and Advil, used for pain, fever and inflammation.
- Warfarin is the generic name for Coumadin, used to prevent blood clots.
- Metformin is the generic name for Glucophage, used to help control blood sugar levels.
- Cephalexin is the generic name for Keflex, used to treat certain infections.

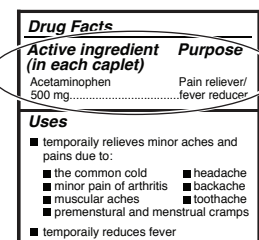
Generic name medicines are often packaged and labeled under the drug store or grocery store brand names, such as CVS or Walgreens.

Compare the labels

For over the counter medicines, most stores will have the generic name medicine right beside the brand name medicine on the shelf.

Compare the labels on the medicines to be sure the brand and generic name medicines have the same **active ingredients**. Active ingredients are the medicines in a product that work to treat your problem. For example, the active ingredient, acetaminophen, is listed on the medicine label for both the brand name medicine and the generic medicine labels shown.

Brand name medicine label for acetaminophen



Generic name medicine label for acetaminophen



| Drug Facts | |
|--|---|
| Active ingredient (in each caplet) Acetaminophen 500 mg..... | Purpose Pain reliever/ fever reducer |
| Uses | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ temporarily relieves minor aches and pains due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the common cold ■ minor pain of arthritis ■ muscular aches ■ premenstrual and menstrual cramps ■ temporarily reduces fever | |

There may be other ingredients in a product, such as dyes or colorings. These are called **inactive ingredients**. They do not change the amount of the active ingredients in a product.

Use medicines safely

- Ask your doctor if there is any reason that you should not use a generic version of any medicine you take.
- Be sure you know the generic name of any brand name medicine you take.
- When refilling prescription medicines: If the medicine looks different or you do not recognize the medicine name on the label, ask the pharmacist to check that it is the right medicine for you.
- **Take the medicine as directed by your doctor or follow the medicine label. Do not take more medicine than what is recommended on the medicine label.** Taking more medicine may put you more at risk for side effects. Medicine dose amounts are set for your health and safety.
- **Follow the directions on the medicine label for how to take the medicine.** These directions help the medicine to work best in your body.
 - If the medicine says to take with food, then eat something when you take your medicine or take the medicine as you eat your meal.
 - If the medicine says to wait one hour before or after eating, then you should do so.
 - There may be other directions for taking medicines.
- **Read the side effects of a medicine before taking it.** You may want to ask your doctor about when to stop taking medicine or when to seek medical treatment if the side effects are serious. Side effects are listed on a medicine label.
- **Ask the pharmacist for help** if you have any questions or you want to know if you have the right medicine.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.