Generic Medications, What are they?

Generic medications are medications that do not have the brand name on them. The brand name is the name given to the medicine when they first came on the market. It is the name that may have made them well known and popular. They are the “original” or first medication of this kind.

A generic drug is the same as a brand name drug. The pills and medicine may look different. Government laws insure that generic and brand name drugs are the same.

GENERIC MEDICATIONS MUST HAVE:

- The same active ingredients as the brand name drug. This is the part of the medicine that works.
- The same strength as the brand name drug. This means they have to be just as strong as the brand name drug of the same dosage strength.
- The same absorption rate as the original medication. This means your body is able to get it into the blood stream for use the same as the original medication.
- The same approval by the Food and Drug Administration. This is one more safeguard so that you know the generic medication is the same as the brand name.

GENERIC MEDICATIONS ARE DIFFERENT FROM BRAND NAME DRUGS:

- Generic medications differ in color, size and shape.
- The inactive ingredients may be different. These are the parts of the pill that allow it to be shaped and colored, delivered and dissolved.
- Generic medications are less expensive. This is because patents have run out on the original medication so now more companies can produce the medications. Competition drives the prices down.

There are many reasons for taking generic medications. Perhaps the main reason is the price. Some insurance companies will not pay for brand name medications when less expensive alternatives are available. You can ask for generic medications. This may help your finances if you are paying for them out of your own pocket. It is wise to use them even if insurance is paying for the medication. We must do everything we can to control the cost of medical care today.

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