

SPUD

POTATO



**Sometimes the same medicines
have different names too.**

Your Guide to Generic Medicines
and Reference Pricing.

**Generic
Medicines**

SAME MEDICINE, DIFFERENT NAME.



Generic Medicines and Reference Pricing - Here's how it will work for you:

Generic medicines are 'copies' of well-known medicine brands. They contain the same active ingredients, and they are just as safe and effective as branded medicines. Due to changes in the law, your pharmacist may offer you a generic or alternative version of your regular medicine. Groups of medicines that do the same job will be given a set price, called a reference price. This law is designed to save medicine costs for you and for the taxpayer. It's being introduced one medicine at a time. Here's how it works.

YOU GO TO YOUR GP AND NEED A PRESCRIPTION

Your GP prescribes a medicine for you. Some groups of medicines are now listed as being safe for substitution - and more medicines will be added to this list over time.

Your GP sees that this medicine might be substituted for a generic or alternative version and assures you it is just as safe as your usual medicine.

You go to the pharmacy. The pharmacist will offer you a version of this medicine which is at the set reference price.



You accept the medicine that's offered at the reference price.

If you have a medical card, you just pay the prescription charge for each item. If you have a drugs payment card, you'll pay up to the monthly threshold as normal.

Please note that the HSE will only count reference prices when calculating your monthly Drug Payment Scheme threshold.



Your GP decides for clinical reasons the medicine should not be substituted. They write 'DO NOT SUBSTITUTE' beside the medicine on your prescription.

You go to the pharmacy. Your pharmacist dispenses the medicine on your prescription at no extra cost.



Or you prefer to have the medicine on your prescription, even if it costs more than the reference price.

You pay the difference between the reference price and the product price. If you have a medical card, you also pay the prescription charge for each item. If you have a drugs payment card, you pay up to the monthly threshold.



What you need to know about generic medicines.

Q. What are these generic medicines I am hearing about?

A. Basically, they are 'copies' of well-known medicine brands. As they contain the same active ingredients, they are just as effective, and safe, as branded medicines.

Q. What's the difference between branded and generic medicines?

A. The main difference - apart from the name, packaging and how it looks - is the generic version is usually available at a lower cost.

Q. Why are generic medicines being offered to me?

A. The law now allows your pharmacist to offer you alternative versions of some medicines. They will only be offered to you if they do the same job as the one on your prescription. This saves you and the taxpayer money.

Q. Are all medicines affected?

A. This law is being introduced one medicine at a time. The first ones to be included are some medicines for high cholesterol and stomach problems. Your GP or pharmacist will tell you if your medicine is affected, or you can check the list on www.imb.ie.

Q. Okay, what happens next?

A. The next time you take your prescription to the pharmacist, they may offer you a less expensive medicine than the one on your prescription. Groups of medicines that do the same job will have a set price, called the reference price.

Q. So I have a choice?

A. Yes, you do. You can choose the medicine that is at, or even below, the set reference price. Or, you may want the medicine on your prescription. If you choose the more expensive version, you will pay the difference between the set reference price and the price of your chosen version.

Q. What if my doctor doesn't want my medicine to be substituted?

A. Then he will simply write DO NOT SUBSTITUTE on your prescription. Your pharmacist will dispense the medicine on your prescription at no extra cost.

If you have any questions about your medicine, talk to your pharmacist or your doctor. You can also get more information at www.hse.ie/generics