

REAL LIFE SOLUTIONS



GENERIC PHARMACEUTICALS

October 2015

SAVE MONEY WITHOUT THE BRAND NAME

There are many wonderful things about October (football, bright-colored leaves and pumpkin spice lattes to name a few). Yet, this month is also the prime crossroad of fall allergies and flu season. The last thing you want is to spent your Black Friday shopping fund on your favorite brand-name pharmaceuticals. Avoid breaking the bank on medications by opting for their generic counterpart.

What are the differences between brand-name and generic drugs?

A brand name drug is originally discovered and developed by a pharmaceutical company. Once the drug is approved by the FDA to go to market, the innovator company has market exclusivity to sell their brand name product through patent protection. The patent allows the innovator to sell its product without competition to recoup the millions of dollars spent during development and to generate a profit. When the patent expires, the product is eligible to be made into a generic drug.

According to the FDA, a generic drug is identical (or bio-equivalent) to a brand name drug in dosage form, safety, strength, routine of administration, quality,

performance characteristics and intended use. Meaning that by regulation there is absolutely no difference between the brand named drug and the generic one. Save the \$20 you would spend on Claritin with \$4 Loratadine, the exact same drug. Generic drugs on average cost 40 to 60 percent less than brand-name drugs.

Generic prescriptions aren't just for over-the-counter medication.

Most hospitals and physicians use generic drugs when medicating their patients. They also prescribe generic medication more often than brand-name drugs! Generic drugs make up more than 80 percent of prescriptions filled in the U.S. When filling or refilling a prescription, ask your pharmacist if there is a generic equivalent available. You'd be surprised at how much you could save!

Avoid confusion at home by labeling your generic prescriptions with its commonly-recognized brand-name.

When perusing your medicine cabinet in the midst of an allergy attack, you may not know off-

hand that Fexofenadine is "Allegra" or that Pseudoephedrine is "Sudafed." Dust off the old label maker and identify your medication in a way that will help you identify it correctly when the you need it! The scientific drug name may also confuse children, who may only identify medicine from the brand-name's TV commercials.

Generic pharmaceuticals should not be confused with counterfeit medicine. Counterfeit drugs are products that are presented in such a way as to look like a legitimate product, yet may contain the wrong dose of active ingredients, the wrong active ingredient in general or no active ingredient at all. These medicines are illegal and may be harmful to your health. If you come across counterfeit medicine, contact the FDA right away.



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When was the last time you checked the expiration dates in your medicine cabinet? When medications are past their prime they can be harmful to your health and may no longer be effective. In addition to avoiding expired medication it is important you know how to properly dispose of them.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are several ways you can ensure the medications you no longer need are not intentionally or accidentally misused. After going through your medicine cabinet, consider these options:

- Medicine Take-Back Programs sponsored by the Drug Endorsement Agency (DEA).
- Take to a long-term care facility, local pharmacy, hospital, or give to law enforcement where medication can be transferred to DEA for proper disposal.
- Mix medication with coffee grounds, kitty litter, or soil, and place in a sealed plastic bag in the trash.
- There are some medications that can be flushed down the toilet but many should not be flushed. To see a complete list visit the CDC's website or ask a pharmacist.

It is important to keep only necessary medication in your home. Remember to keep in a secure place, away from pets and children to minimize the risk of accidental exposure.



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