

For more information

To get the facts about prescription drugs and the value of generics, visit the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research online at www.fda.gov/cder.

You can also visit Medco's website, www.medco.com. Go to "Drug information," then click "Medication resource center," followed by "Generic medication resource center."

www.medco.com

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From
brand to
generic
to you:

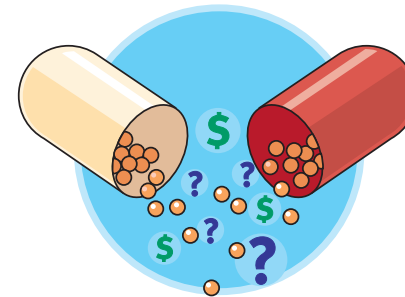
A pill's path

Knowing more
about your
medications
might save
you money.



Tried and true.
Reliable.

That's how many people
feel about a brand-name
drug they take. But might
there be another version
of that drug that works
**exactly the same way
and costs much less?**



Take a look beneath
the pill's coating, then
decide for yourself.



What, if anything, separates a generic drug from its brand-name version?

Nothing at all when it comes to your treatment. But the cost savings can add up to a lot. Let's follow a drug's path from the laboratory to you:

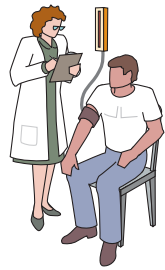
Development

Scientists create a combination of chemicals that they believe will successfully **treat or cure** a medical condition.



Testing

To make sure the new drug is safe and has the desired effect, researchers put it through a **strict series of tests**: first on animals, and then—if the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves—on people.



i Testing can take years to complete.



Evaluation

FDA physicians, pharmacologists, and scientists **review the test data**. If the results hold up, the brand-name drug can be approved for prescription use.

i The FDA continues to monitor the drug's usage and safety even after approval.

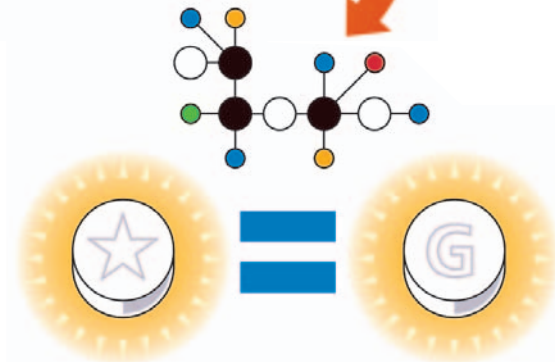
i Once a brand-name drug's patent expires, less expensive versions—such as generic drugs—can become available.



Patent

Usually during testing, the manufacturer files a **patent** on the drug, creating a new brand name and preventing others from making this drug.

This protection typically lasts for about 20 years, but by the time the new drug finally reaches the marketplace, as few as 10 years may remain.



Generic equivalent

Another manufacturer can release a generic equivalent once the patent expires. It must be **bioequivalent** to the brand-name product; that is, its active ingredients must have the **same molecular structure and be shown to perform the same way in your body**. Because of this strict requirement, the generic isn't subject to a repeat round of tests.

What does this mean for you?

The FDA reviews the generic equivalent to ensure that it **meets the same requirements** as its brand-name counterpart.

The generic must have:

- The same active ingredients (although “filler” ingredients, like color, may be different)
- The same dosage form
- The same quality, strength, and purity

Generic drugs cost less to develop, manufacture, and market than brand-name drugs, so they're likely to be less expensive for you and your health plan.

That means if a generic equivalent is available, **you can possibly save money while receiving the same benefit to your health.**

If you're taking a brand-name drug, *talk to your doctor*. A less expensive generic might be right for you.