

Brand Name Drugs vs. Generic Drugs: What's the Difference?

What are Generic Drugs?

Generic drugs are low-cost versions of brand name drugs that are produced by several manufacturers once the patents expire on the brand name versions.

In Canada, brand name drugs have 20 years of patent protection. During that time, only the patent holder can produce the drug, but after that, other manufacturers can apply to Health Canada to produce generic versions.

When Health Canada approval is given, governments, private insurance plans and consumers can benefit from the availability of a lower-priced generic version of the original, brand name drug.

Quality, Safety and Efficacy

The most important thing to know about generic drugs is that there are no differences as far as quality, purity, effectiveness, and safety between generic drugs and higher-priced brand name drugs.

All drugs sold in Canada must be approved by Health Canada. Each product must also meet the strict regulations established by *The Food and Drugs Act*, and both generic and brand name drugs are subjected to the very same rigorous standards.

The active ingredient in a generic drug and brand name drug must meet the same scientific norms and standards set by Health Canada.

When applying to sell a generic equivalent of a brand name drug, the manufacturer must prove that the product is as safe and effective as the brand version.

The manufacturer must also prove that the active ingredients in the medicine are as pure, dissolve at the same rate, and are absorbed in the same manner as the original product.

The Big Difference is Price

The biggest difference between generic and brand name drugs is price. While generic drugs fill more than 40% of all prescriptions in Canada, they account for only 16% of the \$15.4-billion Canadians spend annually on prescription drugs.

GENERIC DRUGS.



SAME QUALITY. LOWER PRICE.

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