

# Weekly Wellness Tip

## What is a generic drug?

When a brand-name drug's patent protection expires, generic versions of the drug can be approved for sale. The generic version works like the brand-name drug in dosage, strength, performance, and use, and it must meet the same quality and safety standards. All generic drugs must be reviewed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The following Q&A may clear up misconceptions you may have regarding generic drugs.

### **How does the FDA ensure that my generic drug is as safe and effective as the brand-name drug?**

All generic drugs are put through a rigorous, multi-step review process that includes a review of scientific data on the generic drug's ingredients and performance. The FDA also conducts periodic inspections of the manufacturing plant, and monitors drug quality – even after the generic drug has been approved.

### **If generic drugs and brand-name drugs have the same active ingredients, why do they look different?**

Generic drugs look different because certain inactive ingredients, such as colors and flavorings, may differ. These ingredients do not affect the performance, safety, or effectiveness of the generic drug. They look different because trademark laws in the U.S. do not allow a generic drug to look exactly like other drugs already on the market.

### **Is my generic drug made by the same company that makes the brand-name drug?**

It is possible. Brand-name firms are responsible for manufacturing approximately 50 percent of generic drugs.

### **Are generic drugs always made in the same kind of facilities as brand-name drugs?**

Yes. All generic drug manufacturing facilities must meet FDA standards of good manufacturing practices. The FDA will not permit drugs to be made in substandard facilities. The FDA conducts about 3,500 inspections a year to ensure standards are met.

The FDA makes it tough to become a generic drug in America, so you can feel confident about taking your generic drugs. If you want to learn more, talk with your doctor, pharmacist, or other health care professional, or visit [www.fda.gov/cder](http://www.fda.gov/cder).

Source: Caremark

## Generics Can Help You Save Money

If you are covered under TeamHealth medical insurance, you can save a considerable amount by choosing the generic over the brand-name. When a generic is available, but the pharmacy dispenses the brand-name drug for any reason, participants pay the difference between the brand-name and the generic, in addition to the regular generic co-insurance (does not apply to the High Deductible Plan). Because participants pay that difference, hundreds of dollars can be potentially saved over the course of the year by choosing the generic.



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