



# Ask Your Pharmacist

## An Rx For Lowering Your Prescription Bill ㊟

(NAPSA)—A growing number of Americans are discovering a good way to lower their prescription bills is to ask their doctors, “Is there a lower cost generic available for my prescription?”

For nearly 20 years, generic medicines have helped individuals, families and seniors get the medicine they need at a price they can afford.

Today, nearly one out of every two prescriptions is filled with a generic drug. Generics offer the same quality, the same effectiveness and the same results, but at a price that can be from 30 to 70 percent less expensive. The average price of a prescription dispensed with a generic drug in 2001 was \$16.85. The average price of a prescription dispensed with a brand name drug in 2001 was \$72.00. That's a savings of 326 percent for the generic. That's a savings that every American can use.

Are generics the same? Yes. All generic products must be approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration; the same agency that approves the brand version of your prescription medicines. Generics must have the same active ingredients, must meet the same gold standard for quality, and must also meet the same stringent government standards for strength, purity and potency as the brand name version. Occasionally generics may be a slightly different size, shape or color than their brand counterpart, but these cosmetic differences have no impact on the safety or effectiveness of the generic drug.

Will a generic work for you? The FDA says “yes!” In fact, the FDA has stated that, “Practitioners and the public may be assured that if the FDA declares a generic drug to be therapeutically equivalent to an innovator drug, the two products will provide the same intended clinical effect. The physician, pharmacist and patient have the FDA's assurance that the physician should see the same clinical results and safety profile.”

Is there a lower cost generic available for my prescription? Today, there are generic versions available for over half of all brand prescription drugs. And more generic products become available every day.

How can I take advantage of the savings offered by generics? The next time you have a prescription filled, ask your pharmacist if a generic version is available. The next time your doctor writes a prescription, ask them if a lower cost generic is available to treat your condition. Doctors and pharmacists are consumers too, and they understand how expensive prescription medicines can be. They can help you select the right prescription for your condition, and your budget.

For more information about generic pharmaceuticals, visit the FDA's Special Report for Consumers on Generic Drugs at: <http://www.fda.gov/cder/about/whatwedo/testtube-17.pdf> or the trade association's Web site for generic pharmaceuticals at: [www.gphaonline.org](http://www.gphaonline.org).