

SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Getting Just What Your Doctor Ordered

(NAPSA)—As the cost of prescription drugs continues to rise, more and more people are looking into “generic equivalents” of the medications they take. For the most part, these drugs offer the same benefits as their name-brand counterparts, at a lower cost. However, in some cases, the generic medicines may have different effects on the body than the drugs that were originally prescribed.

One example can be found in the immunosuppressive (anti-rejection) drugs given to transplant patients. The first of these drugs to market was SANDIMMUNE (cyclosporine, USP). The next generation of cyclosporine was introduced in 1995. Based on microemulsion technology, NEORAL (cyclosporine, USP) MODIFIED may be absorbed more readily by some patients, and therefore expands the range of options available for physicians and their patients. These drugs are indicated for the prevention of organ rejection in kidney, liver and heart allogenic transplant patients.

Although NEORAL and SANDIMMUNE include the same active ingredient, they do not have the same effects on the body. There have been cases where a generic equivalent of SANDIMMUNE was substituted for NEORAL. This generic equivalent may not be absorbed in the same way as Neoral, so some patients may not be getting enough medication—which may have serious clinical consequences.

To avoid incorrect substitutions, transplant patients need to work with their transplant team:



It is important to speak with your doctor and pharmacist to make sure you get the right medication.

- Make clear to your pharmacist that you have been prescribed NEORAL.
- When your prescription is ready, confirm that you were given NEORAL and tell the pharmacist immediately if you were given any product that appears unfamiliar to you.
- Before taking your medication, always take a look at the capsule size, shape, color and printing to make sure it's the right product.
- Call your health care provider immediately if your medication doesn't look familiar.

To learn more, please contact your healthcare provider for important safety and full prescribing information for NEORAL and SANDIMMUNE or visit the Web site at www.novartis-transplant.com.

NEORAL® and SANDIMMUNE® are used to prevent organ rejection in kidney, liver, and heart transplant recipients. Although NEORAL® (cyclosporine, USP) MODIFIED and SANDIMMUNE® (cyclosporine, USP) contain the same active ingredient, cyclosporine, these medications are absorbed differently in the body and should not be used in place of one another. Routine monitoring of cyclosporine amounts in the blood is required to avoid the harmful effects of having too much or too little drug in the body. The main adverse (side) effects of cyclosporine therapy in transplant recipients are changes in kidney function, tremor, extra hair growth, high blood pressure, and excess growth of gum tissue. NEORAL® and SANDIMMUNE® may increase susceptibility to infections and abnormal tissue growth. If you have any questions, ask your doctor and see accompanying prescribing information.