

The Facts about generic medicine



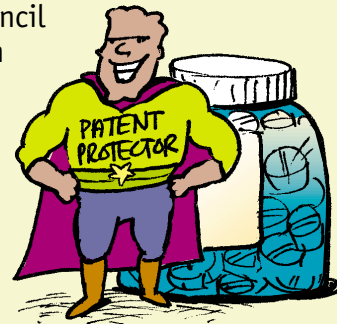
Before you make any decisions, it is important to arm yourself with all the facts.

Read what **Steven Beangstrom** (pictured left), chief pharmacist of the Benefit Society has to say about generic medicine.

Q: What are generic medicines?

A. Once a drug company has approval from the Medicine Control Council to sell their newly developed medicine, they have patent protection that effectively lasts between 5 and 15 years. During this time, no other company may manufacture this specific drug.

Once the patent period has passed, any other drug company may make the medicine. **They use exactly the same active ingredients** but are not allowed to use the same commercial name as the original.

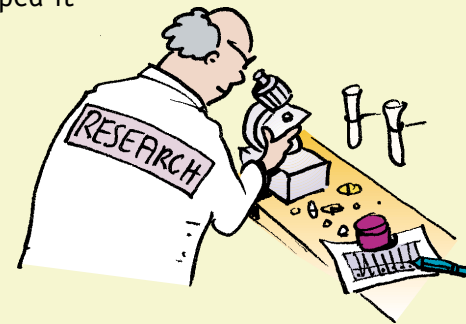


Q: Why are generic medicines cheaper than brand name medicines?

A. **The difference in price is due to research costs.**

Before a medicine is approved, the drug company that developed it would have spent large sums of money on research and development. Once for sale on the market, this drug company will try to recover these costs **and** try to make a good profit on their investment.

Generic medicines are cheaper as the manufacturers don't have the associated costs for the long and expensive process of research and development. Other drug companies can simply copy the ingredients once the patent period has expired.



Note:
Not all brand name medicines have generic alternatives. Always ask your doctor or pharmacist if a generic alternative is available.

GENERIC MEDICINES ARE SAFE!
Before they can be sold, they must be approved by the Medicine Control Council.

Here's how you can save!

Most of us have had a bacterial infection at some stage and needed to take an antibiotic to get better. Your doctor may have prescribed Augmentin, a brand name antibiotic. Did you know that there is a generic alternative, AugMaxcil, available at a much lower price?

Let's compare the prices of the two medicines to see just how much you can save:

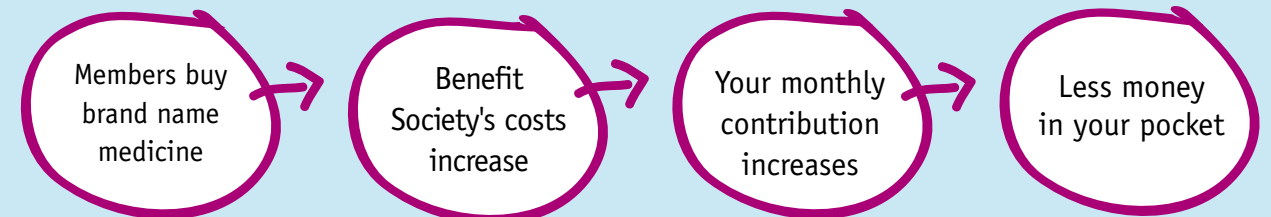
Brand name medicine Augmentin	R149.19	At the Society's Dispensaries you'll currently pay:	R74.69	Generic medicine AugMaxcil
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You can save R74.50 when using the generic alternative!

By using generic medicine, you can get more medicine within your benefit limit.

Your current benefit limit for acute medicines (including over-the-counter medicine) is R1 200 per registered dependant per year, of which the Society covers 70%. This means that you could claim for R1 715 before your annual benefit of R1 200 would be exhausted. **The more expensive your medicines (such as the brand name medicines), the faster you will use up your benefit.**

Insisting on the more expensive brand name medicine can cause member contributions to rise. This will leave you with even less money in your pocket.



NEXT TIME YOU VISIT YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST, ASK ABOUT GENERIC ALTERNATIVES.

Your Pharmacist - there to help you!

Ask your pharmacist about generic medicine. He/she is qualified to give you informed advice. They are also regulated by the South African Pharmacy Council to ensure good practice and service.



Your pharmacist should:

- Give advice on the safe and appropriate use of medicine.
- Help you select affordable, effective and quality medicine (don't forget to ask about generic alternatives!).
- Help you monitor and evaluate your medicine treatment - especially where you are following a strict course of medication, for example high-blood pressure or diabetes.
- Assist you in maintaining your health and general wellbeing by, for example giving advice on vitamins or health supplements.

As a patient it is your responsibility:

- to be reasonable and courteous.
- not to expect your pharmacist to participate in defrauding your medical aid.
- to assist your pharmacist in complying with legal requirements relating to medicine.
- to use medicine with care.
- report any problems experienced.

Your pharmacist will also treat all information about your illness and treatment as confidential.

Keep us in on your beat with **BENEFIT POST!**

We'd like to hear from you.

Is there something that you'd like to know more about?

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BENEFIT BEAT

COMMUNICATING WITH MEMBERS OF THE DE BEERS

BENEFIT SOCIETY

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Generic Medicines - choose to save!

When it comes to health care you don't want to take risks. You only want the best for you and your family. You may not have considered using generic medicine because you may be concerned that it is not as good as the original brand name medication. But how true is that?



It's a fact...

The Medicine Control Council, doctors and pharmacists accept that: Generic medicine and the original brand name medicine contain the same active ingredients.

AND

Here's some excellent news!

GENERIC MEDICINE IS MUCH CHEAPER!

Many members don't know enough about generic medicines and are therefore wary of using them. Others simply don't know how medicine costs increase their medical expenses.

WE ASKED AN EXPERT FOR THE FACTS.

Find out what he has to say about:

- what generic medicine is, and
- why it is cheaper.

Read on to see how you can save!



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