



Are You Getting The Right Prescription at the Pharmacy Counter?

(NAPSA)—New survey data, sponsored by AstraZeneca*, reveals that 84 percent of American patients surveyed feel that their physician should be the leading decision maker in what prescription medications they take for a condition. Moreover, the same survey indicates that 87 percent of these patients want to be told at the pharmacy if they are not getting their originally prescribed medication.¹

Unfortunately, that is not always the case. It is possible that the patient's health insurance company may contact the patient, their doctor, or pharmacist and ask that the patient be changed from the currently prescribed medication to a different drug in the same therapeutic category. This practice, initiated by the insurance companies, is called therapeutic substitution.²

Therapeutic substitution can be a good thing because it could reduce costs, but there can be differences among medications. It's important that patients be involved with health care decisions and be informed about the medication they are prescribed and that they are receiving at the pharmacy.²

According to the National Consumers League, a nonprofit advocacy group representing consumers on marketplace and workplace issues, therapeutic substitution often occurs with statins which are drugs that can help lower cholesterol levels.³ However, it is important to know that no two drugs in one therapeutic class are exactly the same and not all of them have FDA-approved generic forms.

For example, there is no generic version of CRESTOR® (rosuvastatin calcium). When diet and exercise alone aren't enough, adding CRESTOR can help. In adults, CRESTOR is prescribed along with diet to lower high cholesterol, and to slow the buildup of plaque in arteries, as part of a treatment plan to lower cholesterol to goal. CRESTOR is not right



It's wise to follow your doctor's advice when taking prescription medicine.

for everyone, including anyone who has previously had an allergic reaction to CRESTOR, anyone with liver problems, or women who are nursing, pregnant or may become pregnant. Please see additional safety information below.

Knowing your rights as a patient can help you navigate conversations with your provider and pharmacist if you do find yourself faced with therapeutic substitution. When your doctor prescribes a medication, it is because he or she feels it is the right one for you. So, what can patients do to ensure they get the medication that they've been prescribed?

- If applicable, make sure your doctor writes "medically necessary," "may not substitute," or "dispense as written" on the prescription, as required by the state you live in

- Before leaving the physician's office, be sure you understand why your doctor has prescribed that specific medication

- Take the time to ask your pharmacist questions and ensure you're getting the medicine you've been prescribed and check before you leave the pharmacy

- Be familiar with what your medication looks like

- Request that your physician and/or regular pharmacist puts a note in your electronic record explaining that you take a particular medication and that it should not be changed

- Tell your doctor and/or check with your insurance plan, if your medication is changed without doctor/patient communication

Learning the facts about therapeutic substitution and remembering these helpful tips will ensure that you receive "just what the doctor ordered!"

*The AstraZeneca-sponsored survey, conducted by StrategyOne using Toluna field services, was fielded online between May 19 and May 23, 2011 among a nationwide cross-section of 1,000 U.S. adults aged 18 and older. The overall margin of error was ± 3.1 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. For more information on CRESTOR, please visit CRESTOR.com

Important Safety Information about CRESTOR® (rosuvastatin calcium) Tablets

CRESTOR is not right for everyone, including anyone who has previously had an allergic reaction to CRESTOR, anyone with liver problems, or women who are nursing, pregnant, or who may become pregnant. Your doctor should do blood tests before and during treatment with CRESTOR to monitor your liver function. Unexplained muscle pain or weakness could be a sign of a rare but serious side effect and should be reported to your doctor right away. Elevated blood sugar levels have been reported with statins, including CRESTOR. Be sure to tell your doctor if you are taking any medications. The most common side effects are headache, muscle aches, abdominal pain, weakness, and nausea.

Please read the full Prescribing Information.

If you have any questions concerning CRESTOR, please visit CRESTOR.com or contact AstraZeneca at 1-800-CRESTOR.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088. 1346401 10/11.

References:

¹Data on File, 1303202, AstraZeneca LP.

²Gray T, Bertch K, Galt K, et al. ACCP Position Statement. Guidelines for therapeutic interchange-2004. *Pharmacotherapy*. 2005;25:1666-1680.

³National Consumers League. "Common therapeutic drug substitutions." Available at <http://www.nclnet.org/health/42-drug-substitution/91-common-therapeutic-drug-substitutions>. Accessed June 22, 2011.