



# Ask Your Pharmacist

## Saving Money Through Generic Medications

(NAPSA)—Pharmacists are often asked questions about prescription medication, such as possible side effects, dosage instructions and potential interactions. But as health care costs continue to rise, another common question is how to save money on medications.

Often, the best way to save money on a medication is to switch to a generic drug. Generics are often sold at a fraction of the cost of their brand name counterparts.

“Using a generic equivalent is the best and safest option for saving money on medications,” said Lindsey Stephens, pharmacist and director of professional services for Medicine Shoppe International, Inc. “Even if a generic equivalent isn’t available, your pharmacist can recommend a similar generic drug in the same therapeutic class as the prescribed drug, and work with your physician to make the change.”

The price difference between generic and brand name drugs often causes customers to question generics’ effectiveness. In reality, a generic drug is just as safe and effective as its brand name counterpart. To help eliminate confusion around generics, Medicine Shoppe Pharmacists are providing answers to common questions:

### **What is the difference between brand name drugs and their generic alternatives?**

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations require that prescription and OTC generic drugs have the same active ingredients, strength and dosage form—pill, liquid or injection—as the brand name equivalent, making them equally effective. Brand



name and generic drugs do differ in the fillers or additives used, which are inactive ingredients.

### **Why are generic drugs less expensive?**

Generic drugs are less expensive because their manufacturers do not incur costs for initial research or marketing that brand name drugs incur and pass along to the consumer.

### **Is it safe to switch from a brand name to a generic drug?**

Yes. Because generic and brand name drugs have the same makeup, it is safe to switch to a generic.

### **How do I find out about available generics?**

Your pharmacist is a valuable resource for information regarding generic drugs, especially if you are unsure of what generic alternatives are available or have concerns about switching. Even if your doctor prescribes a brand name drug, your pharmacist can advise you of available generic alternatives and work with your doctor to make the switch.

For more information on medications, including a comprehensive drug database, or to find the nearest Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy, visit [medicineshoppe.com](http://medicineshoppe.com).