



Drug FAQs for members

FAQs = Frequently Asked Questions

About Generic Drugs

1. *What is a generic drug?*

A generic drug contains exactly the same active ingredient(s) as the brand name medication. Drug companies patent their new drugs which allows them to sell them without competition for a number of years. When a brand name drug's patent expires, other companies are allowed to make generic versions of that same drug. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) holds generic drugs to the same strict standards they use for brand name medications.

2. *Are generic drugs safe and effective?*

All drugs, including generic drugs, are reviewed for safety and efficacy by the FDA. Before a generic drug is approved, its manufacturer must meet the same FDA standards of purity, strength, stability, and packaging as for brand name drugs.

3. *How do I know that the generic drugs dispensed from Kaiser Permanente pharmacies are of good quality?*

Kaiser Permanente has over 40 years of experience in selecting and evaluating quality generic drugs. In fact, over 70% of the drugs dispensed in the U.S. today are generic products.

4. *Will generic drugs work as well as a brand name drug for me?*

Yes. The generic drug contains exactly the SAME active ingredient as the brand name drug. Part of the FDA testing process assures that the generic will work the same as the brand name).

5. *Why does Kaiser Permanente use generic drugs?*

Using generic drugs helps us to provide you with quality health care at an affordable price. We pass the savings from using generic drugs on to you in the form of lower prescription prices and drug co-payments.

6. *What if I still want a brand name drug?*

Brand name drugs are no longer covered under the drug benefit when a quality generic equivalent is available, because brand name drugs cost considerably more than the generic equivalent. If you choose, you can still get the brand name product, but you will have to pay the Member Rate. Ask your Pharmacist how much it will cost.