

## Prescription Drugs

Everything You Need to Know to Become a Smarter Healthcare Consumer



# Ask Your Doctor About Generics

Generic pharmaceuticals are a great way to save money on your prescriptions. However, some people wonder if a generic prescription is really as good as the brand name, or if there is that much difference in cost. Generic prescriptions have the same active ingredients and can create up to 70% savings when compared to the brand name equivalent.

Remember, getting a generic instead of brand name drug is not as simple as telling the pharmacist you would rather have the generic. It's important to talk to your doctor about whether or not the generic alternative is right for you, because it often depends on the drug(s) you are taking and your specific health condition(s).

## Background Information on Prescriptions, Generics and Costs.

**What are generics:** By definition a generic drug must be the bioequivalent, i.e. made up of the same active ingredients, and produce the same clinical results as its brand-name equivalent. The American Medical Association endorses generic drugs and the Food and Drug Administration requires generic drugs to pass the same standards as brand drugs.

**Prescriptions are expensive:** Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee says that “its not uncommon for brand-name drugs to cost \$200, \$400, even \$1,000 a month.” Multiply any of those dollar amounts by 12... that’s a lot of money to spend on a prescription in one year. Generics can save you up to 70% on your prescription costs!

**Prescription costs vary:** Believe it or not, prescription drug prices can vary as much as 40% in a metropolitan area – meaning at one store the drug may cost \$60 and at another \$100. The cost can even vary as much as 20% within a chain (e.g. Walgreens) in a city. It pays to shop around for the best price on drugs (often, the pharmacy within the grocery store is a good option – call and see how much your drug will cost at another location).

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## Curious whether or not your current prescription has a generic alternative? Want to find out? Just log onto [www.changehealthcare.com](http://www.changehealthcare.com).

To find out whether or not your current prescription has a generic alternative, log on to [www.changehealthcare.com](http://www.changehealthcare.com). Follow these five simple steps:

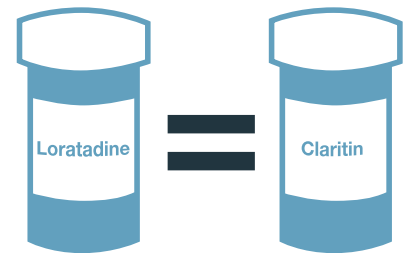
1. Log into your change:healthcare account, or sign-up for a new account by clicking the “sign up” on the change:healthcare homepage.
2. Once logged into the system, click on the “prescriptions” heading.
3. From the search page, type in the name of your drug you are looking for and click “search.”
4. Look through the search results. Once you find your prescription, click on its name to view the drug’s profile.
5. On the drug’s profile, underneath the drugs description on the left-hand side of the screen generic alternative (if they exist) will be listed.

## Talking To Your Doctor

As mentioned on the first page, getting a generic instead of brand name drug is not as simple as telling the pharmacist you would rather have the generic. It's important to talk to your doctor about whether or not the generic alternative is right for you, because it often depends on the drug(s) you are taking and your specific health condition(s). Here are some tips and questions to ask your physician to starting the conversation about generic alternatives:

**Remember:** There are two important things to consider when asking about generic drugs. Is there a generic alternative available? Is the generic appropriate? Not every brand has a generic available, and the generic may not always be appropriate for your condition or treatment.

1. When your doctor identifies a condition that requires new medication, discuss the drug options available.
2. Feel free to specifically ask if there is a generic available. If there is, ask if it is appropriate for your treatment plan.



Physicians are often willing to work with you to find the appropriate drug that also saves you money. If the physician is unwilling to prescribe a generic, it is for a reason.

