

What are Generic Medications?

Generic drugs/medications are copies of brand name medications that are made after the brand name patent has expired. Brand name and Generic medications are subject to the exact same standards and are **both** approved by Health Canada. They work the same way in the body.

Many people use generic medications. An example of this may be buying the store brand **Acetaminophen** (generic) of **Tylenol** (brand name). Currently, nearly 45% of all prescriptions filled by pharmacies are generic drugs, and some hospitals use generic drugs almost exclusively.

How are generic and brand name drugs different?

- They may have different inactive ingredients (such as flavours or preservatives).
- They may have slightly different colours, shapes, or markings.
- Generic drugs cost less.

Are Generic Medications Safe?

Health Canada approves all medications that are sold in Canada, to ensure they work the way they are meant to. They have the same active ingredients (the component that makes the drug work) and the same amount of the active ingredient.

Why offer Generic Medications?

- Generic drugs cost less because much of the expensive research has already been done.
- Generic drugs save money overall in the health care system.

Additional Resources/References

1. Health Canada: The Safety and Effectiveness of Generic Drugs <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/med/med-gen-eng.php>
2. The Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health: Generic Drugs – Your questions answered <https://www.cadth.ca/generic-drugs/your-questions-answered>
3. RX Files: Bioequivalency of Medications <http://www.rxfiles.ca/rxfiles/uploads/documents/Bioequivalency-QandA-Links.pdf>

Questions? We're here for you!

We know it can be confusing to choose and use a method. We are here to help. You can visit one of our Options for Sexual Health Clinics to speak with a health care provider. Our Sex Sense Team is available Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. by phone 1-800-739-7367 or by email at SexSense.org to answer your questions about birth control, or any other questions about sex, sexuality, or sexual health. This fact sheet contains general information and should not be used in place of individual consultation with a qualified healthcare provider.