

### Comments, compliments and complaints

NHS Dorset aims to provide the best possible care and treatment to patients. We welcome any feedback, including compliments or comments, as well as any concerns you may wish to raise. Should you require further advice or a prompt response to your concerns, please contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** for confidential support or guidance, on telephone **01305 361285** or email [PALS@dorset-pct.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@dorset-pct.nhs.uk)

Should you wish to raise a formal complaint, please speak to the customer care manager on **01305 368914** or email [complaints@dorset-pct.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints@dorset-pct.nhs.uk)

You may also write to PALS and the customer care team at:  
NHS Dorset, Vespasian House, 2nd Floor West Wing,  
Bridport Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1TS

For an independent and confidential complaints service regarding services provided by NHS Dorset, please contact the **Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS)** for South West England on telephone **0845 120 3782** (local rate) or log on to [www.adviceguide.org.uk/health](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/health)

### Staff safety

Most people welcome the help and care they receive from healthcare staff. NHS staff have the right to be treated with respect by everyone with whom they come into contact during the course of work. The NHS has a policy that anyone who threatens or behaves in a violent or aggressive way towards staff will be reported to the police.

### Other formats

To order this leaflet in another format or language, please telephone the communications office on **01305 368040** or email [communications@dorset-pct.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@dorset-pct.nhs.uk)  
For details of Trust services and patient information leaflets, please log on to [www.dorset.nhs.uk](http://www.dorset.nhs.uk)

Leaflet: Medicines Management / Generic medicines / SP 1033

Updated: June 2011

## Generic Medicines



This leaflet explains branded and generic medicines

# Generic medicines

## What are generic medicines?

Generic medicines are versions of branded medicines made by other manufacturers.

Drug companies research and produce new medicines. These medicines have a “brand name” (or trade name) and a “generic name” (drug name). For example, paracetamol is the generic name for a widely used pain killer. “Panadol®” is the name one company gives to its own brand of paracetamol.

## Are generic medicines as good as branded medicines?

All medicines are produced by companies who are subject to tight controls on quality. In fact many of the manufacturers of generic medicines are owned by large pharmaceutical companies who make branded products.

## Do generic medicines look different?

Generic medicines may look different from their branded equivalent and other generic forms of the same medicine. They may differ in colour, shape, size and even taste. However, they will have an identical effect on the body.

## Can all medicines be prescribed by generic name?

No. In some cases your doctor may feel it best for you to stick to one branded product and not take the generic equivalent. An example of this would be when you are taking tablets and capsules that have special coatings so the medicine acts more slowly in the body.

## Why do we use generic medicines?

They are usually less expensive and can save the NHS millions of pounds. Savings made in this simple way can be used to benefit you and other patients with no change in the effectiveness of your treatment.

## What should you do if you are worried about a change in the appearance and name of your medicine?

Doctors and pharmacists know which drugs can be safely prescribed and dispensed by generic name. Discuss any worries or concerns with your doctor or pharmacist.

## Summary

It is important that we make best use of the money we spend on medicines, without reducing the quality of the treatment patients receive. If more money is spent on medicines than is available, the extra money has to come from other areas of healthcare. The use of generic medicines can save the NHS millions of pounds.

A medicine has two names:

- a generic name
- a brand name

Generic medicines are **NOT** inferior to branded medicines.

Generic forms of the same medicine may look different from the brand and each other BUT they are as safe and effective as branded medicines.

Generic medicines usually cost a lot less than their equivalent branded medicine. Making changes to your medicines does not mean that you are receiving a reduced quality service.