



Medicines can



look different.



It's what's inside



that's important.





Pharmac is the government organisation that funds medicines for New Zealand, making them cheaper for you.

Sometimes Pharmac makes a decision to fund a different brand of medicine than what has been used before to save money for New Zealand and make more money available to fund other medicines.

This brochure gives you some information about these changes and what it means for you.

### **Why has the medicine changed?**

The actual medicine has not changed. It is the same medicine but with a different brand name and sometimes a different appearance or packaging.

### **Why is it a different brand name?**

Medicines are often sold under more than one brand name. Different manufacturers have different brand names, or sometimes even the same manufacturer produces the same medicine but with different brand names.

### **Will this brand work in the same way?**

You should get the same effect even though this brand may have a different packaging, or be a different colour, shape, size or taste. If you experience any problems talk to your pharmacist or doctor.

### **Is the new brand of medicine safe and effective?**

Yes, the new brand of medicine has been tested, checked and approved by experts at Medsafe (a unit of the Ministry of Health that approves medicines for use in New Zealand).

### **How can I be sure that I have not been given the wrong medicine?**

If you are concerned in any way about your medicine, please ask your pharmacist to check it.

### **Why has my doctor or pharmacist given me a different brand of medicine?**

Your medicine has been changed to avoid extra cost to you. It means you won't have to pay extra for a brand of medicine that is no longer fully funded. Sometimes your medicine will be changed because the manufacturer of the brand you usually have may no longer have supplies in New Zealand.

### **Will the old brand of medicine still be available?**

The brand of your old medicine may not be available anymore. If it is, you can have it but it is likely to cost you more. Ask your pharmacist about this.

### **Who makes the decisions about which medicines should be funded?**

Pharmac is the government agency that makes the decisions about which medicines and brands of medicines are funded and negotiates prices with pharmaceutical companies.



## Are these different brands a cheap alternative that may be of poor quality?

No, they're not. All medicines approved for distribution in New Zealand meet international standards for quality, effectiveness and safety.

## Why are these medicine changes made?

New Zealand has a set budget for buying pharmaceuticals from the overall health budget. To get the best value it can for the pharmaceutical part of the health budget, Pharmac negotiates with manufacturers to get the best price for pharmaceuticals.

Manufacturers compete with each other to give Pharmac the best price for a medicine. This means Pharmac can make valuable savings to buy other medicines.

## So what happens with the money saved?

The savings are used to buy more medicines, and new medicines which can be expensive, for example cancer drugs and medicines for mental health.

To find out more about generic medicines go to  
[www.pharmac.govt.nz/generics](http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/generics)  
or call 0800 66 00 50

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