

## Where are generic medicines made?

Generic medicines are produced in factories all over the world. It doesn't matter where the factory is, it must meet the same safety standards.

Factories that make medicines for New Zealand must meet the high standards of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP). Medicine regulators must inspect and certify all factories regularly. Those regulators use the same standards as Medsafe.

The same factory can sometimes make the active ingredient for both the brand name and generic medicine.

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## Biological and biosimilar medicines

Biological medicines are more complex products than most medicines. They are made of, or from, living things like yeasts, bacteria or animal cells.

Even from one batch to another there can be small variations. As such, a biological medicine made by another company can't be called a generic. Instead they're called a biosimilar.

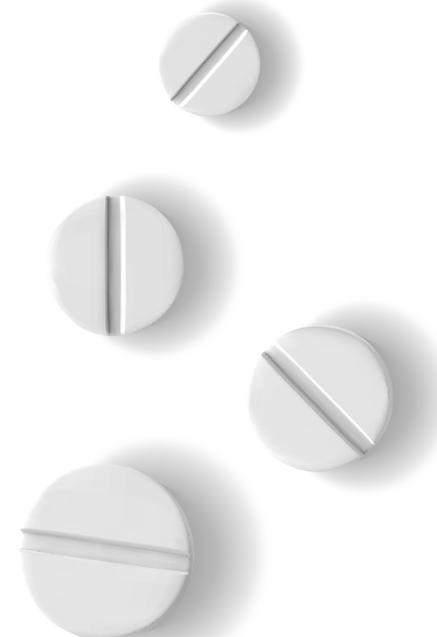
Biosimilars are expected to work just as well as the original medicine.

## Who to contact

If you experience any issues when you change between brands, talk to your pharmacist or prescriber.

If you have questions about funding decisions for generic medicines:

- [enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz](mailto:enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz)
- 0800 660 050



# Generic medicines

A generic medicine has the same active ingredient and works the same way as the original brand.

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## Generics work the same way

Generic medicines have to be 'bioequivalent'. This means that they must:

- > have the same active ingredient
- > deliver the ingredient to the body in the same way
- > have the same effect on the body as the original medicine.

The active ingredient is the chemical that makes the medicine work.

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## Are generic medicines safe?

Medsafe makes sure all medicines available in New Zealand meet the standards of quality, efficacy and safety. Whether a medicine is the original brand or a generic, Medsafe ensures they all meet the standard.

Medsafe is part of the Ministry of Health.

Generic medicines must have the same active ingredients as the original medicine. As such, they have the same risks and benefits as the original brand medicines.



Please visit [www.medsafe.govt.nz](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz) for more information.

## Generic medicines can look different

In all medicines there are both active and inactive ingredients. The inactive ingredients in the medicine are called excipients.

Generic medicines may have different inactive ingredients, which can make them look different.

These inactive ingredients:

- > hold the medicine together
- > give the medicine its colour
- > can make it easier to swallow.

Aside from the medicine itself, the packaging can be different too.

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## Why does PHARMAC fund generic medicines?

By funding generic medicines, we can free up some of our limited budget. This allows us to fund new medicines, like cancer medicines.

We get advice from clinical experts before changing which brand we fund. We may fund a generic rather than the original. We often change funding from one generic to another.



## Why are generic medicines cheaper?

When a company makes a new medicine, they can patent it so that they're the only ones who can make it. While a medicine is under patent, the pharmaceutical company can charge more for it. This covers the cost of developing, testing and marketing the new medicine.

Once the patent expires, other companies can start making the same medicine, the 'generic' version.

It costs less for other companies to put the medicine on the market. They don't have to:

- > develop the medicine from scratch
- > pay for research
- > market it
- > carry out the same clinical trials

Competition between different companies also reduces the cost of generic medicines.

