



## Medicine with the same effect, only cheaper

When you buy a prescription medicine at your pharmacy, the medicine you receive may look different and have another name than what your doctor has written on the prescription. This is because the pharmacy must offer you the cheapest alternative to what you have been prescribed, so you can save money. The medicine works in the same way, only it is cheaper.

### Different versions of the same medicine

It's the active ingredient in a medicine that treats a particular disease or certain symptoms. The medicine also contains excipients (the inactive ingredients) to give it colour, shape and taste. If there are different versions of the same medicine, the active ingredient is always the same, but the excipients might not be.

### Just as effective and just as safe

Because the different versions of the same medicine contain the same active ingredient and in the same quantity, the therapeutic effect is the same and they therefore treat the same symptoms and disease.

All medicines are thoroughly tested and approved by a drug regulatory authority before they can be marketed. They must all meet the same standards of efficacy, safety and quality regardless of the name, price, shape and taste.

All medicines can cause side effects. In most cases, side effects are caused by the medicine's active ingredient, and you can therefore get the same side effects whether you use the most expensive or the cheapest version of the same medicine.

Regardless of which medicine you take, you can read about its side effects in the package leaflet that is supplied with the medicine. Just like the name, shape and colour may vary between different versions of the same medicine, the description of side effects could also differ in the package leaflets.

### Why are you offered the cheapest medicine?

All pharmacies in Denmark are obliged to offer you the cheapest version of the medicine that you have been prescribed by your doctor.

When a pharmaceutical company develops a new medicine, it is called the original, and it is usually protected by a patent for a period of 10 years. During this time, no other companies are allowed to manufacture the medicine and try to make the same medicine at a reduced cost. Once the patent expires, other companies then have the right to manufacture the medicine as so-called generic medicines or simply generics, i.e. medicines that have the same therapeutic effect and treat the same disease, just like the original. When there are several versions of the same medicine – original and generics – they compete against each other, and the price of the medicine drops.

In this way, you and society save money on medicine.

### You decide if you want the cheapest medicine

The pharmacy must always offer you the cheapest alternative to your medicine – unless your doctor has instructed the pharmacy to dispense exactly what's on the prescription. When the pharmacy offers you a cheaper alternative to your medicine, you can always decline. You decide if you want the cheaper or more expensive version of the medicine. Which one is cheapest can change each time you go to the pharmacy to collect your medicine. That's because medicine prices change every fortnight.

## Good advice for medicine users

- Memorise the active ingredient contained in your medicine. If you are not sure what it is, ask your doctor or a pharmacist for advice.
- Don't remove the label from the package. It tells you which active ingredient is contained in the medicine.
- Always tell your doctor if you have allergies.
- Ask at the pharmacy or your doctor if you are unsure about how to take the medicine.