

Generic Medicine

A generic medicine is a medicine that is developed to be the same as a medicine that has already been authorised, called the 'reference medicine'.

A generic medicine contains the same active substances as the reference medicine, and it is used at the same doses to treat the same diseases. However, a generic medicine's inactive ingredients, name, appearance, and packaging can be different from the reference medicine's.

Generic medicines are manufactured according to the same quality standards as all other medicines.

A company can only develop a generic medicine for marketing once the period of exclusivity on the reference medicine has expired. This is usually 10 years from the date of first authorisation.

Each medicine has an approved name called the generic name. A group of medicines that have similar actions often have similar-sounding generic names. For example, phenoxymethylpenicillin, ampicillin, amoxicillin, and flucloxacillin are in the same group of antibiotics.