



Clip, fold and carry for  
handy medical reference





**MEDICAL ALERT information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, PLEASE NOTIFY:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

Blood type: \_\_\_\_\_ Faith: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Current medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Pharmacy: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dear Neighbor,

Prescription drugs can be costly for New Yorkers, especially the elderly, the sick and those with

disabilities. But, thanks to the generic drug substitution law, consumers can lower their prescription drug costs.

Under the generic substitution law, pharmacies maintain access to an up-to-date list of generic and brand-name drugs that are medically equivalent, ensuring access to safe, high-quality medicines at substantially reduced prices. This can result in significant savings for you and your family. Tell your health care practitioner you would like a generic drug prescription to take full advantage of this law.

If I can be of additional help to you in this or any other matter, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Doug Smith  
Member of Assembly

**District Office:**

4155 Veterans Memorial Highway, Suite 9  
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779  
631-585-0230

**Albany Office:**

Room 318, LOB  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5937

**Email:**

smithd@nyassembly.gov

# The GENERIC DRUG SUBSTITUTION LAW



Helping you save money  
on your prescriptions



Compliments of Assemblyman  
**Doug Smith**

# What you should know about **LOW-COST GENERIC DRUGS**



## **Can I be sure a less expensive drug is a safe and effective substitute to the brand name drug?**

Every pharmacy has ready access to a list of safe, effective, interchangeable drugs. Furthermore, most hospitals and state institutions have been using drugs sold under their generic names for some time.

## **How does electronic prescribing encourage the use of generic drugs?**

Electronic or e-prescribing makes it easier to prescribe a generic equivalent rather than a brand-name drug. The current electronic prescription form indicates that a prescription will be filled using a generic substitute unless the health care practitioner explicitly orders the use of a brand name. Also, many e-prescribing systems will alert physicians to the availability of a generic form of the drug they want to prescribe.

## **What is a branded generic?**

Some drug companies have created “branded generic” products that combine a brand name with the drug’s chemical name. It may be cheaper than the more expensive brand-name

drug, but there is probably a less expensive equivalent on the state list. Ask your pharmacist about the most economical way to fill your prescription.



## **Talk to your health care practitioner**

If you are taking prescription medication, stay in touch with your health care practitioner and ask questions. Never take any prescribed medication without their approval. It’s also important to remember that many prescribed medicines can become habit-forming.

Visit the New York State Department of Health website at [health.ny.gov](https://health.ny.gov) for more information on staying healthy.

## **What is a generic drug?**

A generic drug is known by its chemical name (e.g., penicillin), not by a manufacturer’s brand name. A generic drug can cost less than the same drug sold under a brand name.

## **May I insist on less expensive drugs?**

If your health care practitioner approves the substitution, New York State law requires your pharmacist to dispense approved, lower-cost equivalent drugs for your prescription. These less-expensive substitutes are generally non-patented generic drugs and must be on the official New York State Health Department list of approved medically equivalent drugs.

## **Three important steps in generic drug substitution:**

- 1. Inform:** Tell your health care practitioner you want the most effective, low-cost medication. They need to approve its use for you so that your pharmacy can dispense it.
- 2. Compare:** Check the cost at a few local pharmacies as drug prices can vary from store to store.
- 3. Call:** If you have any problems obtaining a generic drug, contact your local state Department of Health office, state Office for the Aging or your local consumer protection office.