Today, nearly 8 in 10 prescriptions filled in the United States are for generic drugs. Generic drugs are important options that allow greater access to health care by supplying the same medications as brand name versions, but for a fraction of the cost to consumers.

While generic drugs may differ in size, color, or taste, the greatest—and most important—difference is the price. On average, a generic drug is 80-85% lower in cost than its brand name counterpart. This is in large part due to the fact that generic manufacturers do not have to pay for costly clinical trials and do not typically pay for advertising and promotion of their products.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates both generic and brand name drugs in the same way. It is required by law that all generics have the same active ingredients as the name brand version, and that they meet the same standards with respect to identity, strength, purity, and potency.

The FDA also monitors adverse event reports for generic drugs in order to continue evaluating the safety of drugs after their approval. Through ongoing research and clinical trials, as well as investigations of adverse event reporting when appropriate, the FDA remains actively engaged in improving all of the products it regulates.

Standards for Generics
- Must contain the same active ingredients
- Must come in the same dosage form
- Must be identical in strength
- Must have the same conditions of use
- Must be absorbed at the same rate

Talk to Your Doctor
When you are prescribed a new medication, ask your doctor if a generic version is available. If you have concerns about generics, discuss them with your doctor. Always speak with your medical provider regarding any potential risks associated with prescription medications.