

“Always talk to your pharmacist or doctor about the changes and always read the label on your medicine and follow the instructions”

For more information, talk to your pharmacist or doctor, or call PHARMAC on 0800 66 00 50 (toll free)

PHARMAC's objective is:

“To secure for eligible people in need of pharmaceuticals, the best health outcomes that are reasonably achievable from pharmaceutical treatment and from within the amount of funding provided”

Pharmaceutical Management Agency

Cigna House, 40 Mercer Street,
PO Box 10-254,
Wellington 6011, New Zealand

Phone 64-4-460-4990
Fax 64-4-460-4995

www.pharmac.govt.nz

(MedchangeDL - Jun08)



“My medicine looks different”

If your medicine has changed, this leaflet will help explain

why



Some common questions about medicine brand changes

Why has my medicine changed?

Your actual medicine has not changed. It is the same medicine but with a different brand name and sometimes a different appearance or packaging.

Why is it a different brand name?

Medicines are often sold under more than one brand name. Different manufacturers have different brand names, or sometimes even the same manufacturer produces the same medicine but with different brand names.

On the back panel of this leaflet are examples of the same medicine with different brand names.

Will this brand work in the same way?

You should get the same effect even though this brand may have a different packaging, or be a different colour, shape, size or taste. If you experience any problems talk to your pharmacist or doctor.

Is this new brand of medicine safe and effective?

Yes, your new brand of medicine has been tested, checked and approved by experts at Medsafe (a unit of the Ministry of Health).

How can I be sure that I have not been given the wrong medicine?

If you are concerned in any way about your medicine, please ask your pharmacist to check it.

Why has my doctor or pharmacist changed my medicine?

Your medicine has been changed to avoid extra cost to you. It means you won't have to pay extra for a brand of medicine that is no longer fully funded. Sometimes your medicine will be changed because the manufacturer of the brand your doctor prescribed has withdrawn it from New Zealand.

Can I have my old brand of medicine?

The brand of your old medicine may not be available anymore. If it is, you can have it but it is likely to cost you more. Ask your pharmacist about this.

Who makes the decisions about which medicines should be funded?

PHARMAC is the government agency that makes the decisions about which medicines and brands of medicines are funded and negotiates prices with pharmaceutical companies.

PHARMAC promotes the responsible use of medicines.

PHARMAC also provides information to health professionals and patients about getting the best value for medicines.

Is PHARMAC giving me a cheap alternative that may be of poor quality?

No, it isn't. All medicines approved for distribution in New Zealand meet international standards for quality, effectiveness and safety.

Why does PHARMAC make these changes?

Because PHARMAC wants to get the best value it can for the pharmaceutical part of the health budget in New Zealand.

Manufacturers compete with each other to give PHARMAC the best price for a medicine. This means PHARMAC can make valuable savings to buy other medicines.

So what does PHARMAC do with the money it saves?

PHARMAC uses the savings to buy more medicines, and new medicines which can be expensive, for example cancer drugs and medicines for mental health.

Where can I get more information about these changes?

If you feel that the new brand of medicine is not working for you, or if you have any more questions or need more information, talk to your pharmacist or doctor, or call PHARMAC on our toll-free number 0800 66 00 50.

Here are some examples:

Name of medicine	Different brand names	What medicine is used for
Ranitidine	Apo-Ranitidine Zanidin Zantac	To treat stomach problems such as ulcers
Diclofenac Sodium	Diclax Flameril Apo-Diclo Voltaren	To relieve pain and reduce inflammation
Citalopram	Arrow-Citalopram Cipramil Celapram	To treat effects of depression