



National Prescribing Service Limited



The Pharmacy  
Guild of Australia

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Get to know your medicines: ask your pharmacist!

During 'Ask Your Pharmacist Week' (31 August – 6 September), the National Prescribing Service Ltd (NPS) and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia are reminding Australians that generic medicines are an equal choice.

Australia has a comparatively low uptake of generic medicines compared to other countries in the western world, even though generic medicines contain the same active ingredient as original brand medicines and meet the same government standards. Only about 30 per cent of all Australian prescriptions are for generic medicines, compared to over 50 per cent in the US, 44 per cent in the Netherlands and 70 per cent in Denmark.

"Generic medicines work in the same way as brand name medicines. They contain the same active ingredient, even if they don't always look the same," acting NPS CEO, Karen Kaye said.

"Some prescription medicines have several different generic brands, and the consumer may not always receive the same one. For this reason it is vital consumers speak to their pharmacist or GP about their medicine so they learn how to identify their medicines."

Kos Sclavos, National President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, says generic medicines can offer value for money, and people should learn the active ingredient in all their medicines.

"Generic medicines can be a good option for many consumers as they are usually less expensive than branded medicines. Your pharmacist is the best person to answer questions about your medicines, and can help you decide if switching to a generic is right for you."

"If you are unsure about any of your medicines, ask your pharmacist to explain what each medicine is for, and which medicine the generic version replaces," Mr Sclavos said.

Ms Kaye agrees and says getting to know your medicines can help reduce the risk of medicine-related problems.

"By being familiar with the active ingredient name, consumers are reassured that the medicine they are taking contains the active ingredient their doctor prescribed. From this, consumers can make informed decisions and reduce the risk of potential confusion and medicine misadventure," Ms Kaye said.

To help people quickly identify the active ingredient in prescription medicines, NPS has developed the [NPS Medicine Name Finder](#). When a PBS-listed medicine is entered into the online tool, the active ingredient name appears, and when the active ingredient is entered its brand names appear. People are then prompted to record their medicine details on a downloadable [Medicines List](#) or print the information. A link is also provided to the [Consumer Medicine Information \(CMI\)](#) leaflet which contains more details about the medicine.

NPS Medicines Lists and the NPS Medicine Name Finder are available to download for free at [www.nps.org.au/activeingredient](http://www.nps.org.au/activeingredient)

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