

Best Practice Giving Out Tool

Generic medicines are an equal choice

**They contain the
same active ingredient**



National Prescribing Service Limited

Best practice on brand substitution when giving out dispensed medicine

Check your pharmacy's policy to determine which of the following steps may be carried out by the pharmacy assistant and which should be referred to the pharmacist. Refer to the pharmacist if unsure at any stage.

- Ensure the dispensary label clearly displays the active ingredient name – place this label on the medicine packaging in such a way that it does NOT obscure the active ingredient name on the container.
- Point out (highlight) the active ingredient name and encourage the consumer to be familiar with this name.
- Confirm with the consumer that brand substitution has occurred with their consent and emphasise that the alternative brand contains the same active ingredient.
- Clarify the indication for the medicine (e.g. lowers blood pressure; relieves pain etc) and consider writing it on the label or packaging if that is helpful for the consumer.
- If the new brand of medicine is replacing another brand previously used by the consumer, also:
 - note the change on the dispensing label and/or an ancillary label
 - explain the change carefully and make sure the consumer understands which brand the medicine replaces
 - show the actual medicine to the consumer and highlight any differences in appearance between the new brand and the one it is replacing.
- Where appropriate, the pharmacist should provide a Consumer Medicine Information leaflet and go through relevant information with the consumer.
- Where appropriate, offer a Medicines List to record all current medicines, or request the pharmacist to update the consumer's existing list.
- Where appropriate, offer additional medication management services (e.g. dose administration aids, medication profiling, *MedsIndex*, medication review etc).

Important things to remember

- Maintain patient confidentiality at all times.
- Ensure you are familiar with your pharmacy's Quality Care Pharmacy Program policy on brand substitution.
- Ensure you understand your responsibility. Speak to your pharmacist if you feel you need additional training.
- A pharmacist should always counsel the consumer when a new prescription medicine is handed out.
- This guide offers best practice advice; ultimately the pharmacist is responsible for ensuring consumers receive adequate information to enable them to use generic medicines safely and appropriately.