

IMPORTANT PRESCRIPTION SAFETY TIPS:

Before having a prescription for a drug filled, or before buying a supplement, ask for:

1. BEFORE HAVING A PRESCRIPTION FOR DEVICE OR A DRUG FILLED, OR BEFORE BUYING A SUPPLEMENT, FIND OUT THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN; I.E. WHERE THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG, DEVICE OR THE SUPPLEMENT WAS MANUFACTURED.

Similar to food and other items, increased numbers of supplements, prescription components, and/or finished generic drugs are currently being subcontracted by American, Canadian and other companies to companies and subsidiaries in China, India, or Croatia, or manufactured by one of multiple fast growing Indian generic drug manufacturers. Some pharmaceutical and medical device companies are closing manufacturing plants in well-developed countries and moving manufacturing to India or component manufacturing to China. Within ten years, it is estimated that Chinese, and Indian pharmaceutical companies will be developing and producing finished dosage forms of new brand name drugs. Currently, at least one Indian company is securing the rights to and producing new forms of older drugs.

1. ASK YOUR PHARMACIST:

To check their on-shelf stock and provide you with:

- A The name of generic drug company
- B. The country where the drug was manufactured, and/or
- C. The name of any subcontractor
- D. Always ask for the country where the drug was manufactured

Ideally, you would like your prescription or supplement to be manufactured in a well-developed country. Developed countries usually have more effective oversight and regulatory systems in place, and lower documented rates of drug tampering and adulteration. Developed countries also have more advanced infrastructure (water, electricity and sewage systems are examples) and distribution networks. Drugs, devices, components and supplements are all most susceptible to product tampering and adulterating elements in shipping/handling and holding (warehousing). The more that drugs and devices are shipped and handled, the longer the time spent in distribution channels, the higher the risk. Antiquated, overwhelmed and/or otherwise unsecure distribution channels also increase risk. Read vitamin and supplement labels to find out the country of origin and expiration date.

3. ASK YOUR PHARMACIST TO WRITE DOWN THE MANUFACTURER'S PACKAGE EXPIRATION DATE. The manufacturer's expiration listed on the side of the manufacturer packaging may vary from the pharmacy expiration date. Check to make sure that the pharmacy expiration date is within the actual drug expiration date.

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1. **CHECK DRUG EXCIPIENTS:** Brand name and different generic drug companies often use different sources for active product, and different sources and different excipients (drug binders, dyes, coatings and fillers). Differences in fillers, dyes, coatings or sources of Active Product Ingredients (APIs) can cause severe reactions, which may include drug reactions or drug interactions. Excipient and/or small manufacturing differences between the generic and brand name versions of the same drug can also change the way that a drug or supplement is metabolized and render it ineffective or, worse still, toxic.

A. **DRUG DYES:** If you are sensitive to food dyes and the drug is available as a generic, ask your pharmacist or doctor to check the various generic brands to see if any are free of dyes.

B. **DRUG COATINGS:** For example, a brand name antibiotic may have a coating, but the generic version may not have the same coating. The generic antibiotic that does not have the same coating may be dissolved and rendered useless by the hydrochloric acid in your stomach, and your infection may only be partially treated, or may take longer to treat.

C. **PRECAUTIONS FOR THOSE WITH DIABETES, ALLERGIES OR OTHER SENSITIVITIES:** If you are diabetic or have allergies or sensitivities, remember to check drug, supplement and vitamin excipients (binders, coatings and fillers) for anything that might affect glucose levels, trigger an allergic reaction, or trigger a sensitivity reaction. Check the ingredient list of different supplement and vitamin brands before you purchase them. Talk to your doctor and pharmacist about pharmacy compounding.

D. **DRUG EXCIPIENTS – LACTOSE:** The milk sugar lactose is a common drug excipient. If you suffer from lactose intolerance, be sure to check drug excipients including the excipients of competing generic brands for lactose.

E. **DRUG EXCIPIENTS:** Corn starch. Corn is a common allergen. If you are sensitive or allergic to corn, be sure to check or have your pharmacist or doctor check drug excipients, including the excipients of competing generic brands.

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4. SAFETY TIPS:

- A. If you have concerns, you or your prescriber can ask your pharmacist to check the various generic brand excipients or brand of their shelf stock before they dispense your prescription. Ask them to get permission from the prescriber (doctor, nurse practitioner etc.) to dispense the generic, device or other prescription brand that best suits your needs.
- B. Whether or not your prescription has refills, you can ask your prescriber to write down dispense as written - DAW – and/or –Medically Necessary–and the name of their preferred generic drug, prescription drug or prescription device brand name and, if applicable company name on their prescription. This can help ensure a more consistent and successful therapeutic outcome. Ask for a copy, and ask your pharmacist or other provider to note this in their records.
- C. If your pharmacist is not able or not allowed to dispense the preferred generic, device or brand name version, you can:
- a. Have your pharmacist contact your prescriber and ask for permission to fill the prescription with a suitable generic alternative;
 - b. Locate a pharmacy that carries or, if you can wait, is willing to order your preferred generic brand and have the prescription filled at that pharmacy;
 - c. Have your prescriber write a new prescription for the brand name drug;
 - d. Have the generic drug compounded by a compounding pharmacy
- D. Talk to your health care provider(s) to find out whether you should collaboratively devise a schedule for taking your medication at the same time each day, and whether it should or should not be taken with food, for example.
- E. Have your pharmacist and physician “red flag” these manufacturers and/or any problematic ingredients. Promptly report any new symptoms or concerns to your physicians and pharmacist.

Remember, your pharmacist is one of your health care team members, and they are a great (and in most cases, free) resource so take advantage of their knowledge.

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