



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association
450 Riverchase Parkway East,
Birmingham, AL 35244

September 7, 2012

***New Generics Plus Formulary
Effective October 1, 2012***

Dear ALL Kids Parent,

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama and ALL Kids want to provide your child quality and cost-effective pharmacy care. On October 1, 2012, your child's ALL Kids benefit plan will begin using a new formulary called Generics Plus. (A formulary is a list of drugs your child's benefit plan covers.) This new list includes generic drugs plus a select number of brand-name drugs that are covered under your child's benefit plan.

Generic drugs are safe and cost effective. Using them adds value to your healthcare dollar. The attached Frequently Asked Questions contains more information about generic drugs.

Almost all generic prescription drugs are on the formulary. Generic drugs on the formulary are good choices for most medical conditions requiring drug therapy. A few generic drugs are not covered because safer or more effective generic drugs are on the formulary.

Attached is a summary of the most commonly prescribed drugs on the Generics Plus Drug Guide. If you do not find your child's brand name drug listed, you can visit our website to see the complete Generics Plus Drug Guide.

- Go to www.bcbsal.com
- Click "Pharmacy"
- Under *Prescription Drug References*, select "Prescription Drug Guides"
- Select "[Search the Generics Plus Prescription Drug Guide](#)"

If your child is currently taking a brand-name drug that is not covered by Generics Plus, talk to their doctor about which covered medications would work best for your child. You can find generic drug options for most common conditions. Generic drugs may cost less and they are often a better value. Prescription changes should always be the result of consultation between you and your child's doctor. Coverage will not be provided for prescription drugs not on the Generics Plus Drug Guide after October 1, 2012.

Your child's health is important to us. If you have questions about the new drug list, please call 1-800-760-6851.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dorinda Cale".

Dorinda Cale, PharmD, Director of Pharmacy

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a generic drug? A generic drug is a copy of its brand-name counterpart drug. Both formulations use the same active ingredients. Generic drugs work in the same way as their brand-name counterparts, and they usually cost less.

Are generic drugs as good as brand-name drugs? Yes. Brand-name and generic drugs sold in the United States are approved and regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). When the FDA approves a generic drug, this means it has determined the generic drug is the same as its brand-name counterpart in dosage, performance, safety, strength, quality and usage. There are two ways a generic drug can be prescribed to you:

- A **generic equivalent** has the same active ingredients as its brand-name counterpart. Many pharmacies make this substitution automatically, according to your benefit design.
- A **generic therapeutic alternative** is similar in clinical effect to a brand-name drug treating the same condition. While both drugs treat the same condition, they have different active ingredients. The generic therapeutic alternative can save money by treating the same condition and providing proven effective clinical results.

What if the drug I am taking is not available as a generic? Some drugs are only available as a brand-name. But in many cases, there are generic drugs that act in the same or similar way as the brand-name drug you are taking. Talk to your doctor about whether one of these generic therapeutic alternatives might be right for you.

How do I find out if I can take one of these generic drugs instead of the brand-name drug I am taking now?

Talk with your doctor. He or she will be familiar with the different drugs and your medical condition. Your doctor can decide if a generic drug is right for you. If your doctor agrees that a generic drug can be safely used instead of your current brand-name drug, he or she can write a new prescription for the generic drug. When you fill this prescription at a participating plan pharmacy, you may begin saving immediately.

Why do generic drugs look different than brand-name drugs? A generic drug might be a different color, size or shape than a brand-name drug. The FDA requires that the active ingredients in a generic drug be the same as in the brand-name drug. However, inactive ingredients – such as coloring agents and flavor – may differ.

Why do generic drugs cost less? When the patent expires on a brand-name drug, other companies may begin making and selling the drug under its generic name. Manufacturers spend years and millions of dollars researching a new brand-name drug and bringing it to market. A generic drug does not have these expenses.

If it's just a small copay difference, why should I change? Many people must take certain drugs regularly for the rest of their lives to help preserve health. So the cost savings between a generic drug and a brand-name drug – even just a copayment – can really add up over time. Choosing generic drugs helps control rising healthcare costs.

For more information, go to:

www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/default.htm or www.MyPrime.com