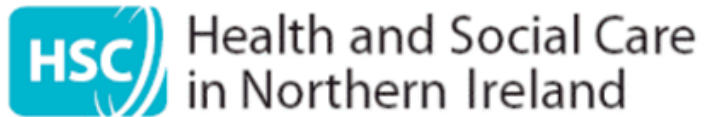


Patient Information Leaflet produced by the SPPG Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team.

MHRA



Epilepsy Action



Changes to your Antiepileptic Medicine



**Switching from branded to generic
antiepileptic drugs**

What is a generic medicine?

The generic name is the medicine's official name, whereas the brand name is chosen by the manufacturer. Several companies may make the same medicine, each with their own brand name. In the past it was recommended that all antiepileptic drugs should be prescribed by brand name, such as Keppra[®] or Vimpat[®].

What has changed?

Guidelines from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) advise that certain antiepileptic drugs do not need to be prescribed by brand name. Therefore based on MHRA advice, antiepileptic drugs such as levetiracetam (commonly prescribed as the brand names Keppra[®] or Desitrend[®]) and lacosamide (brand name Vimpat[®]) should be prescribed as the generic for most patients.

Why switch to generic?

It is the Department of Health's policy that medicines should be prescribed generically in all appropriate circumstances. Switching from the brand to the generic helps us to make better use of limited health service resources because generic medicines are more cost effective.

Generic medicines contain exactly the same drug and are as safe and effective as the branded product. The government ensures that generic medicines are made to the same high standard as the equivalent brand.

Do generic medicines look different to the brand?

A range of generic levetiracetam and lacosamide products are available and some may look different from the branded tablet you are currently taking. If you have any queries, please speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

What does this mean for me?

Your doctor will consider your own particular circumstances before deciding whether your antiepileptic drug is suitable for switching to the generic equivalent e.g. from Keppra[®] to generic Levetiracetam or from Vimpat[®] to generic lacosamide. You will then have the opportunity to discuss the change with a doctor or pharmacist before deciding if you wish to try the generic medicine.

Is there any experience of other patients switching in the past?

Yes. Most patients in Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK are already on the generic version of levetiracetam or lacosamide. Many patients across Northern Ireland have successfully switched in recent years following discussion with their doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Additional information is available on the [MHRA](#) and [Epilepsy Action](#) websites (QR codes overleaf).