

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

Changes to your Levetiracetam Tablets



Switching from Keppra[®] to Generic Levetiracetam

Generic v Brand

The generic name is the official medical name for the medicine, whereas the brand name is chosen by the manufacturer. Several companies may make the same medicine, each with their own brand name.

What has changed?

In the past it was recommended that all antiepileptic drugs (AEDs) should be prescribed by brand name, such as Keppra[®]. This is because, for some AEDs, switching to a different manufacturer could cause loss of seizure control, or result in side effects.

However, guidelines from the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Authority (MHRA) state that it is not necessary to prescribe all AEDs by brand name – it depends on the specific medicine. **For many AEDs, it is quite safe to switch between different manufacturers of a drug.**

What about Keppra[®] / Levetiracetam?

The MHRA has advised that it is usually unnecessary to maintain patients on a specific brand of levetiracetam such as Keppra[®] and therefore we are recommending that levetiracetam is prescribed as the generic for most patients. Whilst Keppra[®] is a commonly prescribed brand, the information in this leaflet will be applicable to switching from other brands such as Desitrend[®] to generic levetiracetam.

Why switch to generic?

It is the Department of Health's policy that medicines should be prescribed generically in all appropriate circumstances.

The Government ensures that generic medicines are made to the same high standard as branded medicines. They contain exactly the same drug and are as safe and effective as the branded product, but at a lesser cost to the health service. This helps us to make better use of limited health service resources.

Does the generic medicine (levetiracetam) look different to the brand (Keppra[®])?

A range of generic levetiracetam products are available and some may look different to the Keppra[®] tablet you are currently taking. If you have any queries, please speak to your community pharmacist or doctor.

What does this mean for me?

Your doctor will consider your own particular circumstances before deciding whether you are suitable for changing from Keppra[®] to generic levetiracetam. You will then have the opportunity to discuss the change with a doctor or pharmacist before deciding if you wish to try the generic.

Is there any experience of other patients being switched in the past?

Yes. Most patients in Northern Ireland are already on the generic version of levetiracetam.