

Generic prescribing guidance

Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group recommends the prescribing of medicines by their generic name using the recommended International Non-proprietary Name that is as described in the British National Formulary.

Prescribers are encouraged to prescribe medicines by their generic name, (without reference to a specific manufacturer), using the recommended International Non-proprietary Name (rINN) that is as described in the British National Formulary (BNF). In general, prescribing medicines generically rather than brand name can improve cost-effectiveness and is encouraged.

However, there are some circumstances where this does not apply. These include:

- Where there is a difference in bioavailability between brands of the same medicine, particularly if the medicine has a narrow therapeutic index.
- Where modified release preparations are not interchangeable.
- Where products contain multiple ingredients and brand name prescribing aids identification.
- Where there are important differences in formulation between brands of the same medicine.
- Where administration devices (e.g. inhaler or self-injection) have different instructions for use and patient familiarity with one product is important.
- Where the product is a biological rather than chemical entity.
- Where the Medicines Optimisation Team have identified and recommended the use of a branded generic¹.

A generic medicine contains the same quantity of active substance(s) as the proprietary medicine that originally received marketing authorisation (i.e. the reference medicine). In primary care, if a medicine is prescribed by brand name, the pharmacist may dispense only the specified brand and is reimbursed for doing so. If a medicine is prescribed by generic name, the pharmacist may dispense any suitable generic or branded product and is reimbursed at a set price, listed in the Drug Tariff. As it allows for any suitable product to be dispensed, this can reduce delays in supplying medicines to the patient.

Providers commissioned to provide services on behalf of Mid-Essex CCG are reminded that they are required to follow the Mid-Essex CCG formulary and prescribing guidance as detailed in their contract (Medicines Management Service Specification). See the Medicines Optimisation page on the Mid Essex CCG website for all prescribing guidance: <https://midessexccg.nhs.uk/medicines-optimisation>

¹ Branded generic is the brand name given to a drug that is bioequivalent to the original (innovator) brand, but once the original brand name has come off patent it is marketed under another company's brand name, not the generic name. Mid Essex CCG recommends certain branded-generic products where they are more cost effective than generic prescribing. Recommendations are communicated to practices through MOLES projects and also added to Scriptswitch

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