

DON'T SUB MY DRUGS



- Getting the right epilepsy medicines is vital for keeping your seizures under control.
- Epilepsy medicines are called anti-seizure medicines (ASMs). They are sometimes called anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs).
- There are different versions of the same type of epilepsy medicine available. Find out how to get the right version for you.

Why are there different versions of epilepsy medicines?

- Most medicines have a generic name and a brand name. The generic name is the same as the main (active) ingredient in the medicine. The brand name contains the same active ingredient but is named by the drug company. Generic medicines are often equally as effective as branded medicines
- Medicines will contain other inactive ingredients. These can vary between different versions.
- Some people don't experience any changes if they take a different version of their medicine. But some people may have more seizures or side effects. This is more likely for some medicines than others
- Medicines can come in different forms. For example, tablets, liquids or powders. Some versions may be easier for you to take than others

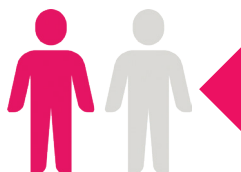
An example

Levetiracetam is the active ingredient and the generic name. There are a few generic versions available. Keppra is the brand name.

Every version of levetiracetam 250mg tablets contains 250mg of levetiracetam.



A survey by Epilepsy Action found that:



Around 1 in 2 people had been offered a different version of their epilepsy medicine because their normal version wasn't available.



7 in 10 people had difficulties accessing their epilepsy medicine.

When should the version of my medicine not be changed?

You will be prescribed the generic version or a named branded version of your medicine. The company name can also be recorded if you need a specific generic version.

You can discuss what is recorded on your prescription with the person prescribing your medicine. They may prescribe a specific brand or form of medicine. But, usually a pharmacist can then only give you this version of medicine.

Epilepsy medicines are sorted into 3 categories:

Category 1 – Switching to a different version may increase the risk of seizures or side effects. You should stay on the same version

Category 2 – You and your healthcare professional should decide if you should stay on a specific version. Consider your seizure and treatment history

Category 3 – The risk from switching to another version is very low

How do I know what category my medicine is?

Visit our webpage epilepsy.org.uk/dontsub

Ask your GP, pharmacist, epilepsy specialist or nurse

Record information about your epilepsy medicines

You can show this leaflet to your pharmacist to help you get your medicine. Ask your doctor, epilepsy nurse or pharmacist for help if needed.

Generic and brand name	Drug company	Category	Dose and frequency	Medicine form

GETTING YOUR MEDICINES.

WHAT TO DO.

1. Record the details of your medicine in this booklet to take with you to the pharmacy
2. Try to plan ahead and avoid running out when possible. Get your repeat prescription fulfilled as early as you can
3. Check you have medicines you expect before leaving the pharmacy
4. If your medicine is out of stock, ask for your prescription back and take it to another pharmacy
5. You might be offered a different version of your medicine because of supply issues. It's safer to take a different version than run out completely
6. Speak to your GP, epilepsy nurse or epilepsy specialist if you're concerned about switching versions
7. Ask your doctor if your medicine is a controlled drug. There are restrictions about how this can be prescribed urgently
8. Ring 111 or visit 111 online for urgent advice if you have run out of your medicine or if you're unable to get your medicine anywhere locally



Helpline: Call us on **0808 800 5050** or message us online for more information
[epilepsy.org.uk/helpline](https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/helpline)



Epilepsy Action's Drugwatch page has the latest information on medicine changes and shortages. Visit [epilepsy.org.uk/drugwatch](https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/drugwatch)

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