

Is My Prescription Available as a Less Expensive Generic?

You can use the FDA’s online information to find out! The FDA Web site lists all of the prescription medicines—brand and generic—that have been approved by the FDA.

You can begin your search by following these step-by-step instructions.

To locate the information, type <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/> into the address line of your Web browser (Internet Explorer, Netscape, AOL, for example) and then hit “Enter” on your keyboard.

Alternatively, you can type <http://www.fda.gov/cder/> into the address line of your Web browser. Once you’ve arrived at this FDA Web site, look at the right hand side of the page for the column titled “Quick Info Links” and click on “Drugs@FDA.”

You should see the Web page below:



There are three easy ways to search for your *prescription* medicine: by using the brand name, generic name, or viewing the list of drug names. We recommend “browse by drug name.”

Browsing by Drug Name

If you aren't sure how to spell a drug's name, whether it's the brand or generic name, you can look it up by clicking on a letter of the alphabet, located in the center of the page under "Browse by Drug Name."



The screenshot shows the Drugs@FDA website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration logo and the text "U.S. Food and Drug Administration" and "Department of Health and Human Services". Below this is the "Drugs@FDA" logo and a navigation menu with links for "FAQ", "Instructions", "Glossary", "Contact Us", and "CDER Home".

The main content area features a section titled "A Catalog of FDA Approved Drug Products" with a list of bullet points: "Approved and tentatively approved prescription, over-the-counter, and discontinued drugs" and "Drug approval letters, labels, and review packages".

Below this is a search section titled "Search by Drug Name or Active Ingredient" with a text input field and "Submit" and "Clear" buttons. The input field contains the text "Enter at least three characters:". A red arrow points to the "Browse by Drug Name" section below the search field.

The "Browse by Drug Name" section contains a grid of letters from A to Z, along with a "0-9" button. The letters are arranged in three rows: Row 1: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I; Row 2: J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R; Row 3: S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z, 0-9.

Below the grid is an "Advanced Search" section with a list of bullet points: "Application Number (NDA, ANDA, BLA)" and "Action Dates of Application Approvals and Supplements".

At the bottom, there is a "Downloadable Database File" link and a "Disclaimer" link. The footer contains various links: "CDER Home Page", "CDER Site Info", "Contact CDER", "What's New @ CDER", "FDA Home Page", "Search FDA Site", "FDA A-Z Index", "Contact FDA", "Privacy", "Accessibility", and "HHS Home Page".

EXAMPLE: Suppose you were searching for the brand name "Zocor" (generic name: simvastatin). Use your mouse to click on the letter Z.



After you've clicked on a letter, you'll see a page listing all of the approved drugs that have names beginning with that letter. This list, arranged in alphabetical order, includes both brand and generic names.

Scroll down the page until you see the name of the drug for which you are searching. There might be more than one page of names. In that case, you'll see the word "Page" with a number next to it located on the right-hand side of the page.

Click on the name of the drug (it should be underlined) to view more information.

EXAMPLE: Scroll down the page until you see the name "Zocor," then click on it to view more information about the medicine.

Clicking on the name of the drug will take you to this next page, which provides an overview of the drug. This page lists the active ingredients, manufacturer, strength and dosage forms (tablet, capsule, etc.) of the drug. However, the important point is to determine whether a generic is available.

The screenshot shows the Drugs@FDA website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the FDA logo and the text "U.S. Food and Drug Administration" and "Department of Health and Human Services". Below this is the "Center for Drug Evaluation and Research" logo and "Drugs@FDA" branding. A search bar is visible with the text "Start Over" and "Back to Search Results". The main content area is titled "Overview" and lists the following information:

- Drug Name:** ZOCOR
- Active Ingredient(s):** • SIMVASTATIN
- Form(s) and Strength(s) Available:** • TABLET; ORAL: 10MG; 20MG; 40MG; 5MG; 80MG

Below this information, there is a section titled "Click on a drug name or application number to view drug details:" followed by a table. A red arrow points to the first row of the table, which is highlighted in yellow. The table has the following columns: Drug Name and FDA Application Number, Dosage Form/Route, Strength, Marketing Status, and Company.

Drug Name and FDA Application Number	Dosage Form/Route	Strength	Marketing Status	Company
ZOCOR (NDA # 019766)	TABLET; ORAL	Multiple Strengths	Prescription	MERCK

At the bottom of the table, there are links: "Back to Top", "Back to Previous Page", and "Start Over". A "Disclaimer" link is also present. The footer of the page includes "CDER Home Page", "CDER Site Info", "Contact CDER", and "What's New @ CDER".

Next, to find out whether there is a generic version, look at the table that appears under the words “Click on a drug name or application number to view drug details.” You will see a heading on the left side of this table titled, “Drug Name and FDA Application Number.”

Look below this heading. You will see the name of the drug for which you are searching in the yellow part of the table. (In this **EXAMPLE**, you would see Zocor (NDA#019766).)

If you know the strength and dosage form of the drug for which you are searching, you can check to see if the information in the table matches what you are looking for. Sometimes the FDA has approved a generic version of one form of the drug but not another. This information will be listed on the same line as the drug name.

Now that you’ve checked the table, click on the name of the drug that appears in the yellow box of the table. The name should be underlined and appear with a number. In this **EXAMPLE**, you would click on “Zocor (NDA#019766).”

Drugs@FDA - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/index.cfm?fuseaction=Search.DrugDetails

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
 CENTER FOR DRUG EVALUATION AND RESEARCH
 Department of Health and Human Services

Drugs@FDA
 FAO | Instructions | Glossary | Contact Us | CDER Home

Drugs@FDA Demo | What's New in Drugs@FDA

Start Over | Back to Search Results | Back to Overview

Drug Details

Drug Name(s): ZOCOR (Brand Name Drug)
 FDA Application No.: (NDA) 019766
 Active Ingredient(s): SIMVASTATIN
 Company: MERCK

[Therapeutic Equivalents](#) | [Label Information](#)
[Approval History and Related Documents](#)

Products on Application (NDA) #019766

Drug Name	Active Ingredients	Strength	Dosage Form/Route	Marketing Status	RLD	TE Code
ZOCOR	SIMVASTATIN	5MG	TABLET; ORAL	Prescription	No	AB
ZOCOR	SIMVASTATIN	10MG	TABLET; ORAL	Prescription	No	AB
ZOCOR	SIMVASTATIN	20MG	TABLET; ORAL	Prescription	No	AB
ZOCOR	SIMVASTATIN	40MG	TABLET; ORAL	Prescription	No	AB
ZOCOR	SIMVASTATIN	80MG	TABLET; ORAL	Prescription	Yes	AB

After you've clicked on the name of the drug, a page titled "Drug Details" should appear. If a generic is available, it will tell you in two different places on this page.

The first way is to check the table located in the lower part of the page titled "Products on Application." In this table, look at the last column on the right, "TE Code." This refers to "Therapeutic Equivalence," or generic version. If you look in that column and see the letters "AB" listed next to the name, active ingredient, dosage form and strength of the prescription medicine that you use, then a generic version is available.

You might also see other "A" codes (AA, AN, AO, AP and AT) listed in that column. All of these codes mean that the generic is available and may be substituted for the brand.

If there is no code listed next to the name of your prescription medicine, then the generic version is not yet available. You might also see a code that begins with "B" (e.g., BX), which means that the products are not equivalent and not substitutable for the brand product.

The second way to determine whether a generic is available is to look for the words "Therapeutic Equivalents," which should appear in the center of the page. If no generic is available, then you will see the words "There are no Therapeutic Equivalents" on the page.

Click on “Therapeutic Equivalents” to view the list of generic drugs that may be substituted for the brand.

In the above **EXAMPLE** for Zocor, you can see “AB” and “Therapeutic Equivalents” on the page. That means a generic version is available.

Therapeutic Equivalents

Drug Name(s) **ZOCOR (Brand Name Drug)**
 FDA Application No. (NDA) 019766
 Active Ingredient(s) SIMVASTATIN
 Company MERCK

TABLET; ORAL; 5MG
 TE Code = AB

Drug Name	Active Ingredients	Strength	Dosage Form/Route	Marketing Status	RLD	TE Code	Application Number	Company
SIMVASTATIN	SIMVASTATIN	5MG	TABLET; ORAL	Prescription	No	AB	076052	IVAX PHARMS
ZOCOR	SIMVASTATIN	5MG	TABLET; ORAL	Prescription	No	AB	019766	MERCK

TABLET; ORAL; 10MG
 TE Code = AB

Drug Name	Active Ingredients	Strength	Dosage Form/Route	Marketing Status	RLD	TE Code	Application Number	Company
SIMVASTATIN	SIMVASTATIN	10MG	TABLET; ORAL	Prescription	No	AB	076052	IVAX PHARMS
ZOCOR	SIMVASTATIN	10MG	TABLET; ORAL	Prescription	No	AB	019766	MERCK

TABLET; ORAL; 20MG

On this “Therapeutic Equivalents” page, you’ll see a listing of all of the generic versions, along with the names of the companies that are producing the medicines. You might have to scroll down the page to view all of the different strengths and dosage forms that are available.

EXAMPLE: On this page, the brand version is listed in bold print. The generic version (simvastatin) is listed above it.

To look for another medicine, simply click on the “start over” button at the top of the screen.

Even if your medicine has a generic version, you should always check with your pharmacist to see if the generic is in stock. There may be a lag time between FDA approval and when the generic medicine reaches your pharmacy’s shelves.

How will I know if there is no generic available for my medicine?

If there are *no* generics available, you will see the words “There are no Therapeutic Equivalents” in the middle of the screen in the yellow box.

The screenshot shows the Drugs@FDA website interface. The page title is "Drugs@FDA - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows the URL: <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/index.cfm?fuseaction=Search.DrugDetails>. The page header includes the U.S. Food and Drug Administration logo and the text "U.S. Food and Drug Administration" and "Department of Health and Human Services". Below the header, there are navigation links: "FAQ | Instructions | Glossary | Contact Us | CDER Home". The main content area is titled "Drug Details" and contains the following information:

- Drug Name(s): FEMARA (Brand Name Drug)
- FDA Application No.: (NDA) 020726
- Active Ingredient(s): LETROZOLE
- Company: NOVARTIS PHARMS

Below the drug details, there is a yellow box containing the text: "There are no Therapeutic Equivalents" and "Label Information". A red arrow points to this box. Below the yellow box, there are links: "Start Over", "Back to Search Results", and "Back to Overview".

The "Products on Application (NDA) #020726" table is shown below. The table has the following columns: Drug Name, Active Ingredients, Strength, Dosage Form/Route, Marketing Status, RLD, TE Code. The row for FEMARA shows: Drug Name: FEMARA, Active Ingredients: LETROZOLE, Strength: 2.5MG, Dosage Form/Route: TABLET; ORAL, Marketing Status: Prescription, RLD: Yes, TE Code: None. A red arrow points to the "TE Code" column in this table.

At the bottom of the page, there are links: "Back to Top | Back to Previous Page | Start Over", "Disclaimer", "CDER Home Page | CDER Site Info | Contact CDER | What's New @ CDER".

EXAMPLE: In the example shown above, the brand drug Femara does not have a generic equivalent. How can you tell? In the center of the page, it says “There are no therapeutic equivalents.” Also, under the heading “TE Code” in the “Products on Application” table, the word “none” appears.

To begin another search, simply click the “start over” button located on the upper left-hand side of the page.

What if there are no codes listed next to my medicine? When will my medicine become available as a generic?

There is no simple answer to this question. Most brand medicines are protected by several patents; this means that a generic manufacturer cannot sell that product until the patent has expired or the generic manufacturer has satisfied certain legal hurdles related to the patent. Often, patents will expire in different years or new patents will be issued, making it hard to determine when the brand medicine will be available as a generic.

What if I still have questions?

For additional information about the FDA's information, click on "FAQ" or "instructions" located at the top of each page.

Please note that the information contained in the Drugs@FDA Web site is provided by the FDA. GPhA is not responsible for the content contained in outside Web sites.