Generic medications replacing some brand names at USNH Yokosuka

By Jennifer Savage,
USNH Yokosuka Public Affairs

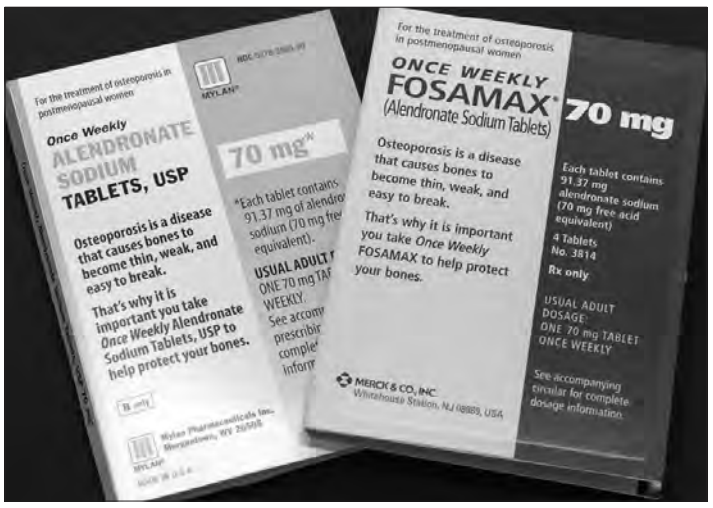
More and more generic medications are becoming available in the market, replacing their more expensive counterparts both in pharmacies across the U.S. and here at U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka. Not only is it saving money, from a military perspective, it is line with a Department of Defense policy to substitute generic medications for brand name medications when a generic equivalent is available.

Many well-known brand name drugs have generic equivalents that are chemically identical to the brand name drugs. Generics are just as potent, pure, safe and reliable as their brand name counterparts. In fact, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires that all generic drugs undergo rigorous testing to prove they are the same as the brand name drug before they are approved.

This switch will not impact patient safety or health. The main way a patient may notice a difference is that the tablets may change in appearance when switching from brand name to generic. A change in the tablets' appearance may also occur when the hospital changes from one generic drug company to another. A patient may notice this change when re-filling prescriptions. Tablets in each prescription container should be uniform in appearance.

Some drugs which have recently changed to generic, or will in the near future, at USNH Yokosuka are Lamictal, Allegra, Topamax, Lo/Estrin, Liquid Motrin, Ortho Tri Cyclen, Imitrex, Ortho Cyclen, Fosamax, Liquid Tylenol, Keppra, Effexor and Moisturel, to name a few.

Because the hospital cannot stock brand name medications when generics are available, if patients require a brand name medication they will need to utilize the TRICARE mail order program (TMOP). Brand name drugs that have a generic equivalent may be dispensed only if the prescribing physician is able to justify that it is medically necessary to use the brand name drug. If patients prefer to have their prescriptions filled with a brand name medication over a generic, with out the physician deeming it medically necessary, they will be responsible for paying the entire cost of the prescription.



USNH Yokosuka, in line with a DoD policy, will be replacing some brand name medications with their less expensive generic counterparts.

Photo by Tom Watanabe

Again, this switch should not impact patient health or safety in any way. The FDA requires that generic medication be just as potent, pure, safe and reliable as their brand name counterparts. If you ever have questions concerning your medications, please call the USNH Yokosuka pharmacy at 243-5669.

DeCA launches Li'l Heroes Baby Program

By Courtney Rogers, DeCA Public Affairs

As part of an ongoing effort to emphasize that the commissary is a benefit for the whole military family, the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) launched an exciting new initiative: the Li'l Hereos Baby Program July 6.

A new addition to the family brings not only more joy, but also more expenses. As household budgets tighten, the average savings of 30 percent or more customers realize by shopping at the commissary helps families make ends meet.

"Customers have told us that the commissary is their most important nonpay benefit, so we want to maintain that by supporting the whole military family as much as possible," DeCA Director and CEO Philip E. Sakowitz Jr. said. "We value the sacrifices these families have made for our country, and hope that the support this program will provide will make the commissary even more worth the trip for them."

The Li'l Heroes Baby Program will be featured on a special section of http://www.commissaries.com that will offer articles from DeCA dietitian Lt. Col. Karen Hawkins, and the agency's home economist, Kay Blakley, as well as links to other government sources providing tips and advice to new parents.

The highlight of this new program will be the DeCA e-newsletter: the Li'l Heroes Benefit Bulletin. In addition to linking commissary customers to the articles mentioned above, this monthly e-newsletter will provide access to military-exclusive vendor Web pages offering special savings for readers. This information will help you learn how to make the commissary that much more worth the trip for the things your little ones need.

For more information on the program, and to subscribe to the Li'l Heroes Benefit Bulletin, visit http://www.commissaries.com/baby.