

Switching from Keppra® to generic Levetiracetam



Epilepsy medicines are available in different versions, made by different companies. This leaflet explains why you are being given a different version of your epilepsy medication.

It can be worrying if you receive different epilepsy medicine. However, there are rules to make sure that there is low risk to switching to a different version of your medicine.

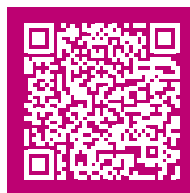
What is the guidance about switching between versions of my medicine?

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) regulates medicines in the UK. The MHRA has published guidance about prescribing epilepsy medicines.

The guidance, available here -

🌐 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/547307fee5274a1301000042/con336730.pdf>, puts epilepsy medicines into 3 categories.

These show how safe it is to switch to a different version.



Keppra® is a brand name for levetiracetam which is a category 3 medication. There is usually no need to stay on a specific version of category 3 medicines. The risk of different versions causing problems with seizures or side effects is extremely low.

Your health professional will still consider other factors to decide if you should stay on the same version. These include whether you would be happy to take a product with a different colour, size, shape or taste. They will check whether switching versions would cause you any worry or anxiety. If you have autism, mental health conditions, or learning disabilities, then they should also consider this.

Why have I been given a different version of my epilepsy medicine?

There are many reasons why you might get a different version of your medicine, including cost and supply problems.

Health professionals in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde aim to prescribe generic (non-branded) medications when they can, as they are much cheaper than the original branded medicine. This is called generic prescribing. It means your pharmacist can give you any equivalent version of the same medicine. The savings made by using generic medicines allow the NHS to treat more patients.

Are there any differences between different versions of levetiracetam?

Whatever version of epilepsy medicine you have, the active ingredient should be the same. For example, every version of levetiracetam 250mg tablets should contain 250mg of levetiracetam.

However, all medicines have other 'inactive' ingredients as well as the main one. These can be different, depending on who makes the medicine.

These other ingredients can affect how well a medicine is absorbed in your body. This could make a difference in how well the medicine works too. However, any new generic medicine must be shown to be 'bioequivalent' to the original medicine. This means there should be no noticeable differences in how it acts in your body.

Different versions of a medicine may also look different. Some medicines also come in coated and uncoated versions. They may be a different colour, size or shape. They will also have different packaging.

Could switching between different versions of my medicine be a problem?

Some people say that switching versions does cause a change in their seizures. Others may have a breakthrough seizure after previously being seizure-free. Some people might also have different or more side effects.

There could be a number of reasons for this:

- It could be due to chance. It might be a coincidence that these changes happened at the same time you switched medicine
- It might be due to not taking the new version of the medicine correctly. You may find it harder to take, perhaps due to a change in size or taste. Differences in the packaging could also create confusion with taking the correct dose
- The small differences between versions and how they're absorbed could affect how well they work in some people. Although this is thought to be unlikely for most medicines, experts can't rule it out. This risk changes depending on which medicine you take.

It is always important to discuss any new change in your seizures with your health professional.

For further information please speak to your health professional or visit Epilepsy Action's page which can be found here -

 <https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/treatment/anti-seizure-medication/switching-between-different-versions-of-epilepsy-medicine>

