

# Brand change notification

## Losec and Omezol brands to change to Dr Reddy's Omeprazole

You have been given this information because you are taking a medication called omeprazole, which is known by the brand name Losec or Omezol.

Omeprazole is used to treat:

- reflux oesophagitis or reflux disease
- acid-related dyspepsia
- peptic ulcers.

Currently, the Government (through PHARMAC) funds Omezol and Losec so that you do not pay the full cost of these medications. PHARMAC is changing the brand of omeprazole that it funds to Dr Reddy's Omeprazole.

From **1 May 2009**, Dr Reddy's Omeprazole will be the only omeprazole medication that PHARMAC funds.

The information below will help guide you through the changeover period.

### Why is the brand changing?

PHARMAC has reached an agreement with a new supplier of omeprazole. Because of this agreement, PHARMAC will save money if it buys omeprazole from the new supplier, which will mean PHARMAC has more money available to buy other medicines.

### Will the new brand cost any more?

No. The new brand, Dr Reddy's Omeprazole, will cost you the same amount as the old brands, Losec and Omezol, cost you now.

### Will the medication work in the same way?

Yes. The medication itself is not changing, only the brand name. So instead of seeing Losec or Omezol written on your pack when you collect it from the pharmacy, you'll see Dr Reddy's Omeprazole.

Talk to your doctor if you notice any changes when you switch from Losec or Omezol to Dr Reddy's Omeprazole.

### How will patients benefit?

The change of medications gives you the opportunity to:

- ask your doctor to review your medication
- change the dose you are taking to treat your symptoms, if you need to. (Always discuss this with your doctor.)

### When will the changeover happen?

From **1 May 2009**, only Dr Reddy's Omeprazole will be funded by PHARMAC.

This changeover will take place over the next few months as the funding for Omezol and Losec is reduced.

**This means that you have nearly 1 year to see your doctor and ask for a review of your medication.**

Keep the dates below handy as your costs may go up if you ask for Losec or Omezol after these dates.

- From **1 July 2008** the cost of Omezol may go up.
- From **1 January 2009** the cost of Losec may go up.

### Will Omezol and Losec still be available?

PHARMAC cannot guarantee whether Omezol and Losec will still be available or what their cost will be.

It is the pharmaceutical suppliers of Omezol (Pacific Pharmaceuticals Ltd) and Losec (AstraZeneca New Zealand Ltd) who decide whether the old brands will still be available.

### Will the new tablets or pack look different?

Yes. Because Dr Reddy's Omeprazole, Losec and Omezol are all made by different manufacturers, the capsules and the packs they come in all look different. However, they contain the same medication — omeprazole.

The new brand, Dr Reddy's Omeprazole, will have the same range of strengths (10mg, 20mg and 40mg capsules) as the old brands.

Dr Reddy's Omeprazole capsules are a different colour from Losec and Omezol capsules.

Dr Reddy's Omeprazole 40mg capsules are also larger than Losec and Omezol 40mg capsules. But the 10mg and 20mg capsules are the same size as Losec and Omezol 10mg and 20mg capsules.

The packs for Dr Reddy's Omeprazole will also be different colours and sizes from the packs for Losec and Omezol.



Dr Reddy's Omeprazole capsules will be available in blister and bottle packs. Let your pharmacist know which you'd prefer.

### Where can I get more information?

Phone the PHARMAC helpline **0800 66 00 50**.

Email [brandswitch@PHARMAC.govt.nz](mailto:brandswitch@PHARMAC.govt.nz) with queries or comments.

Further information can be found by clicking on the **Brand Switch** button on the PHARMAC website, [www.pharmac.govt.nz](http://www.pharmac.govt.nz).

Your doctor or pharmacist will also help guide you during the changeover period.

