

Brand change notification

Paracetamol 500mg tablet

Panadol changing to
Pharmacare paracetamol



You are currently taking a medicine called paracetamol which is known by the brand name Panadol. Other companies also make paracetamol and PHARMAC is changing the brand the government pays for (the subsidy) to Pharmacare paracetamol.

Why is the brand changing?

PHARMAC has reached an agreement with a new supplier of paracetamol. Continuing with the current brand would mean an increased cost of approximately \$20 million per year to the Pharmaceutical Budget. This would mean that PHARMAC would be unable to fund (subsidise) as many new medicines over the following years.

Will the medicine work the same?

Yes. The medicine itself is not changing, only the brand. This means you should have the same effect from taking Pharmacare paracetamol as you would have from taking Panadol. Known side effects from paracetamol are rare and not specific to any particular brand of paracetamol. If you notice any prolonged side effects from Pharmacare paracetamol, you should discuss this with your doctor.

Will the new tablets or pack look different?

Yes. The Pharmacare paracetamol tablets look different as they are made by a different manufacturer; however, the medicine in the tablets will still be the same. The size and colour of the pack will also look different, although the tablets will still come in blister packs. Pharmacare paracetamol tablets are not film coated like Panadol tablets, but they are capsule-shaped which should make swallowing them easier.



Will the new brand cost any more?

No. There will be no extra cost to patients for Pharmacare paracetamol.

When will the change occur?

Pharmacare paracetamol will become available (fully subsidised) from 1 December 2008. The price for prescribed Panadol will increase from 1 January 2009; however, the subsidy will remain the same. There will be a part-charge for Panadol from 1 January until 1 May 2009, when the subsidy will be removed altogether. After that, the only subsidised brand of paracetamol will be Pharmacare.

Will the old brand be available after 1 May 2009?

The availability of prescribed Panadol after 1 May 2009 is up to the supplier, GlaxoSmithKline New Zealand. PHARMAC cannot guarantee the availability or price of this medication purchased on prescription after this date. You will still be able to buy Panadol over the counter, at your pharmacist or supermarket.

Where can I get more information?

Please phone the PHARMAC helpline, **0800 66 00 50** (between 9 am and 4 pm weekdays).

You can also e-mail brandswitch@pharmac.govt.nz with your queries and/or comments.

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