

Brand change notification

Losec to change to Dr Reddy's Omeprazole



You have been given this information because you are taking a medication called omeprazole.

Omeprazole is used to treat:

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

Currently, the Government (through PHARMAC) funds Losec so that you do not pay the full cost of this medication. 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 brand, Losec, costs 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 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 to Dr Reddy's Omeprazole.

Has the new brand been tested?

Yes. Dr Reddy's Omeprazole has gone through the same careful testing, and meets the same high quality standards required by all registered New Zealand medicines. Dr Reddy's Omeprazole has been approved by New Zealand's medicines regulator, Medsafe.

Dr Reddy's Omeprazole is sold and used worldwide, and has an approximately 40% market share of omeprazole capsules in the UK.

When will the changeover happen?

From 1 January 2009 there will be a part payment required for Losec prescriptions because full subsidy will no longer be available for Losec. Dr Reddy's Omeprazole will be fully subsidised during this time.

From 1 May 2009, Dr Reddy's Omeprazole will be the only fully subsidised brand of omeprazole available, and Losec will no longer be subsidised.

Will Losec still be available?

PHARMAC cannot guarantee whether Losec will still be available or what the cost will be.

It is the pharmaceutical supplier of Losec (AstraZeneca New Zealand Ltd) who decide whether the old brand will still be available.

Will the new tablets or pack look different?

Yes. Because Dr Reddy's Omeprazole and Losec are made by different manufacturers, the capsules and the packs they come in 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 Losec.

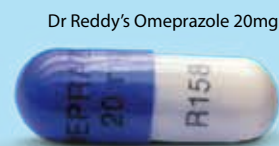
Dr Reddy's Omeprazole capsules are a different colour from Losec capsules.

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

The packs for Dr Reddy's Omeprazole will also be a different colour and size from the pack for Losec.



Losec 20mg



Dr Reddy's Omeprazole 20mg

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 with queries or comments.

Further information can be found by clicking on the **Brand Switch** button on the PHARMAC website, www.pharmac.govt.nz.

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