

Pharmacy Warning

Many of the costliest and widely used drugs have not come off patent in the United States. Thus they are only available by U.S. pharmacies and through health care insurers' formularies by their trade name and are not available in a 'generic' form until such time as the patent expires.

A good example is the drug Lipitor (trade name) that is used to lower cholesterol. The generic name is atorvastatin and this generic form is not marketed in the U.S.

This has provided an illegal opportunity for unscrupulous dealers outside the U.S., often in developing countries, to manufacture the drug, or worse yet, an ineffective look-alike. This drug is then marketed in the U.S. via the Internet at a cut rate to unwary consumers as the "generic" version of the drug. These are **not** the same as importing brand-name drugs from Canada at a cost reduction. The phony generics may be and often are no drug at all, since there is absolutely no control of their content.

Be alert! If you have filled a prescription for generic drugs at a cut rate from an offshore provider, have a pharmacist confirm that the contents are the real thing. Also, be advised that these so-called generic supplies of drugs that are only available in the U.S. under their patented trade name, are **not** paid for under the KPS Health Plans pharmacy benefit.

When in doubt, check with your pharmacist, provider or contact MedImpact Customer Service at 800.788.2949 to see if the drug you want is available in a "generic" form.