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| *This message is part of an email series offering tips for good health and advice to help you understand and get the most out of your Premera Blue Cross health plan.* |
| Are you paying too much for prescriptions? When it comes to medicine, many people think a brand name drug is best. But is that true? Today you can find brand name, generic, and authorized generic drugs. All three are FDA approved. All are safe and effective. Here’s how they differ.  **Brand Name**  Brand name drugs are sold by the company that invented the medicine. The inventors are allowed to be the only company that sells the drug for a set time. After that, other companies can make their own generic versions. Brand name drugs usually cost more than generics.  **Generic Drugs**  Generic drugs are made by a different company than the one that invented the brand name version. A generic drug must have the same amount of the same active ingredient as the original. Doctors can substitute generic for brand name drugs when they write your prescription, and it will likely save you money.  **Authorized generics**  Authorized generic drugs are made by the same company that produces the brand name version. They are marketed as a generic drug under a different label, but are otherwise the same in:   * Safety * Quality * Dosage * Strength * How they work * How they’re administered * Active ingredients   The only differences between a brand name drug and the authorized generic version may be the color, size or shape of the medication. Authorized generics may also save you money. |
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