



Samples of Feedback on Novo-Methylphenidate -ER-C

Comment:

Our pharmacy switched us to the generic Concerta about a month ago. After a few weeks we noticed that the pill took a long time to kick in and that it wore off sooner than the brand name Concerta. Our son, who is almost 11 years old also commented that he felt more hyper on the generic Concerta. I contacted my doctor and asked that he fax the pharmacy to say "no substitutions". This was done and the insurance company covered the brand name Concerta. It is my belief that the deliver system of the generic Concerta is inferior.

Comment:

Once the generic was available,our private insurance wouldn't cover the cost of Concert anymore. Due to the fact that my son has two prescriptions (to create the appropriate dose for him), the cost over and above insurance for us would be \$50 per month. 2 months ago, we switched to the Generic. Within that first week, I received a call from his teacher reporting that his ability to focus wasn't the same, and he was not getting any work done. I think it is important to note that we did NOT tell the school that we had switched his meds. We noticed a change in him at home as well-especially in the evenings when he was fidgety, argumentative and unsettled. The pharmacist suggested that the Pediatrician resend the prescription with 'NO SUBSTITUTIONS'. When I contacted him, he wasn't the least surprised by my call (apparently we had not been the only family that had come back to ask the same question)

Comment:

My son has been on Concerta for about the last five years without incident. We moved from the United States to Canada last year. Our first few prescriptions were filled with the brand Concerta, but recently with out our knowledge or consent we were switched to the generic. My son now complains of not feeling like himself and argues about taking his medication. This has never been an issue before. I wish that I was told when were switched to the generic and given the opportunity to pay the difference for the brand out of pocket. I think it irresponsible to switch someone's medication without their knowledge. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Comment:

The generic medication does not last as long as Concerta for my 7 year old son who is taking 54 mgs. every morning. I notice that his symptoms reappear 2-3 hours earlier when on the generic medication, which limits his abilities in academics, sports and socialization in the early evening. We have gone back to Concerta and have noticed an improvement.

Comment:

I have twin 15 year olds, soon to be 16 year olds in grade 10 who have been on various levels of Concerta since grade 4.

The girls were switched to the generic version and from the 1st day it has not worked. Their various symptoms were:

- daily complaints of not feeling "right"
- loss of focus all day long
- meds wearing off after 3 or 4 hours therefore not getting them to their last class of the day
- fatigue
- hunger
- irritability
- hyper active (not a usual component of my ADD girls)
- unable to attend during class lessons
- constant bickering with twin sister (both)
- brain not quiet at any time of the day
- overly emotional
- easily stressed
- becoming very anxious and worried all the time about school work and inability to complete tasks
- disorganized to the point of accomplishing very little and extreme frustration
- odd aches and pains throughout their bodies etc.

I asked the girls to give it a period of adjustment but after nearly 4 weeks and no improvements and tears over their fears of not being able to write their exams. I contacted their pediatrician with a 911 need for an appointment. When I outlined the reason for the urgent appointment to her assistant, she knew right away what I was talking about (lots of patients with the same complaint).

At this time I can say without a doubt that the difference in my children was like night and day, in all the years they have been taking Concerta they have never complained vs. everyday they were on the Generic version.

The Generic almost amplified their Executive Functioning deficits and placed barriers to classroom learning for them both that they had not experienced in years.

Please help us come up with a better solution for our girls, we have the summer to figure this out but something has to be in place for September or they won't make it through grade 11 and we don't have the money to pay the difference.

Comment:

As soon as the generic came out my pharmacist notified me. I had a million questions for him when my son was prescribed Concerta. I asked his personal opinion on the generic he replied "If it were my son I would stick with Concerta not a generic. I have not received enough information on the chemical makeup of the generic brand to feel confident about a child taking this substitute." He advised me to get a letter "NO SUBSTITUTES" from our pediatrician.

Comment:

We had an extremely negative experience with generic Concerta. Because the government has endorsed this product our drug plan would only cover the cost of the generic, and because the cost difference between the two products was so steep, we were forced to change my son over to the generic. We had negative reports from the school almost immediately. Basically, he appeared to be unmedicated by 1pm when he took his pill at 7:00am. We were used to 12 hour coverage. In the afternoon at school, he was impulsive and argumentative. He decided to climb a tree during a structured daily physical activity period and then argued with the teacher about it. Previously, with Concerta the school had no concerns. Relationships with his siblings were negatively affected as well, with each and every thought coming out of his mouth with no filter whatsoever. When we reported these problems to our doctor she gave us a card provided by the makers of Concerta to pay the difference. We assumed that the problem would be solved immediately. Not so. Our drug store would not allow the co-pay card to be used on a repeat prescription, so I took time off work to take my son back to the doctor for a new prescription. Unfortunately, the problem was still not solved, because our

insurance would not pay until the time that the generic prescription would have run out. So we had to tough it out until the 90 days of the generic were used up. Two days ago, we finally got his new Concerta prescription filled and our household has returned to a calmer state. This whole fiasco was perpetuated by people and policies which do not take into account the challenges that families with ADHD experience. He was initially being treated with a drug that worked. He was successful.

I haven't been this angry in a long time. Not sure why, but perhaps it has to do with the fact that this issue has serious implications for the well-being of my little guy. I don't know whether to be mad at Novopharm for making the generic drug so similar in appearance to the original, at the pharmacist for giving us the generic without warning us, at the pediatrician for a) not writing "no substitutions" on her scrip and not warning us that the pharmacy might give us the generic, or Health Canada for failing to do more research before determining that the drugs were equivalent.

Comment:

Our 5 year old son fairly intense symptoms of ADHD, so we have to give him about 50 mg of methylphenidate per day. Because he's such a little guy, we need to be certain that the drug is released slowly into his system throughout the day and not all at once.

We had been doing this by given him traditional Ritalin pills at several points throughout the day. But to make our lives easier, our pediatrician recently prescribed Concerta, because of its slow-release technology. The pharmacist gave us something that looked like 18 mg Concerta -- beige and oval -- but my husband noticed that the label said Teva-methylphenidate, and he somehow remembered that original Concerta has a slightly different name. I decided to split a capsule apart. We remembered that Concerta is supposed some have some kind of nifty release mechanism, but we saw no evidence of this in the capsule I split open. It was white compressed powder, through and through.

A little internet research made us realize that the pharmacist gave us a generic drug produced by Novopharm. The more we read about this generic drug, the more upset we got. I am normally not opposed to using generic drugs, but in this case, as far as we can tell, the generic version bears almost no resemblance to the original Concerta. It seems wrong -- possibly even unconscionable -- that Health Canada has decided to view them as comparable.

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Has there been any update on the situation since CADDAC wrote to Health Canada in February? Is there anything we can do (such as writing a letter) to emphasize to Health Canada that we believe they need to do some more homework?