

Make the **switch**

Smarter spending **for your NHS**



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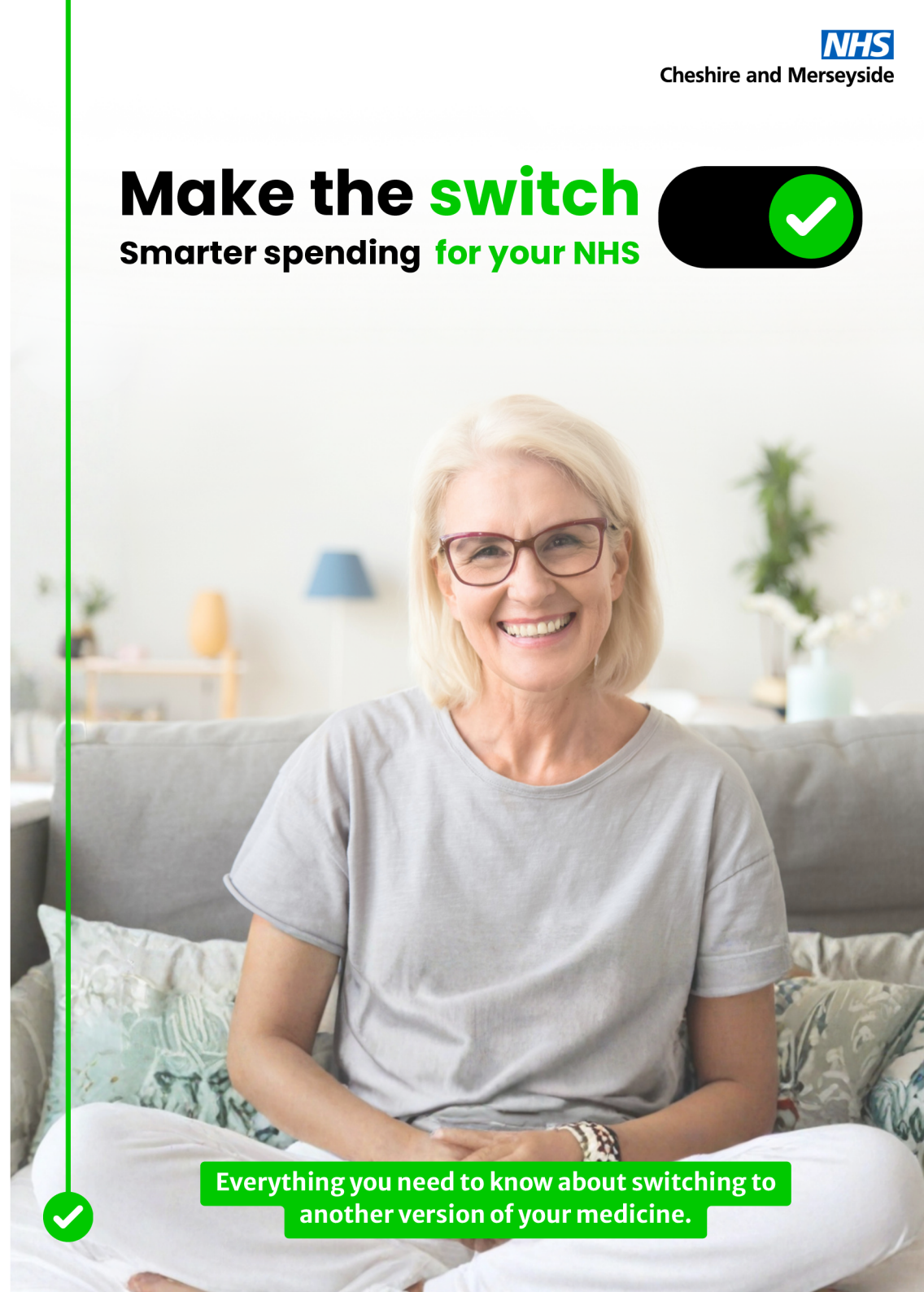
Smarter spending **for your NHS**



Help us make sure NHS resources are available for more patients, so that we all get the treatment we need, when we need it.



For more information visit:
www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/MakeTheSwitch



Everything you need to know about switching to another version of your medicine.

If you take prescribed medication, your NHS team may talk to you about switching to another version of your medicine.

Why do we use generic, bioequivalent, or other different medicines, and what are the benefits to switching?

They may propose that you switch:

- to a better value, equivalent version of the same medicine
- to a newer formulation of the same medicine
- to a different medicine that can treat your condition effectively

Find out more about switching medicines in this leaflet.

✔ What are 'generic' medicines?

Generic medicines are other versions of brand-name medicines, that contain the same active ingredient, and work in the same way.

✔ What are 'bioequivalents'?

Bioequivalent medicines (sometimes called 'biosimilar') are other versions of brand-name biologic medicines (which are medicines made from living cells or organisms, rather than chemically synthesised like traditional medicines).

Bioequivalent versions of biologic medicines work in the same way.

✔ Are they as safe and effective?

Generic and bioequivalent medicines are tested and regulated to the same standards as brand-name medicines, by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), to ensure the same quality, safety, and effectiveness.

This ensures there are no clinically meaningful differences between these medicines and the original brand-name products, so they are interchangeable.

Switching medicines is always done with patient safety as a priority, and will only be proposed if the switch is appropriate for your health needs.

✔ Making NHS money go further

The NHS is responsible for using public funds in the most effective and sustainable way possible. Switching to more cost-effective versions of medicines allows us to make substantial savings, which can be reinvested into other services and treatments, without compromising your care.

Generic and bioequivalent medicines are usually better value because they are made by different manufacturers than the original brand-name version of the medicine. When patents (exclusive rights) on the original medicines expire, other manufacturers can then produce the same product at a much lower cost.

✔ Better treatment for patients

Sometimes new research or national guidance may show that a different medicine or formulation is more effective, or safer, for treating a specific health condition, so switching medicines can support better treatment and fewer side effects.

✔ Timely treatment for everyone

Switching medicines helps us make sure that resources are available for more patients. If there are supply chain problems for a particular medication, switching to a more readily available version ensures that patients get the treatment they need, when they need it. This means you may use different brands of the same medicine over time, that are all equally safe and effective.

How we will support you to make the switch

– Switching medicines is always done with patient safety as a priority, and your NHS team will always communicate any medication switches to you.

- Your NHS team will provide you with details of who to contact if you have any concerns or questions about switching medicines.
- They are here to support you, and will advise you on what is appropriate for your specific medication and health needs.