



Starting treatment without delay

Jo takes her prescription to the local pharmacy. The pharmacist explains: “I have the drug your doctor prescribed, but under a different name”.

Jo hesitates: “It’s for my cystitis, and I’d really like to start treatment right away! Are you sure it’s the same?”

– “Look: the two medications contain exactly the same active substance. You only need to look for the INN - in other words, the International Nonproprietary Name. It’s a drug’s real name, regardless of the brand name. Whether it’s a brand or a generic equivalent, the same drug can have several brand names. You can always tell what it is by looking for the INN”.

Jo will be able to start treatment right away, and she knows she’ll be taking the drug her doctor prescribed - thanks to the INN.

The INN is the only reliable way of identifying a drug

The INN (International Nonproprietary Name) is quite simply a drug’s real name. Created by the World Health Organization (WHO), the INN system is used throughout the world. It allows healthcare professionals and patients to identify a drug precisely and with confidence, and to avoid potentially serious adverse effects due to confusion between drugs. With the INN, everything is simpler, clearer and more precise.

Ask your doctor and pharmacist to explain the INN system



“The INN campaign: a drug’s real name”: explanations and other materials produced by the Medicines in Europe Forum are available from the following websites:

–Association Mieux Prescrire (www.prescrire.org)

–Fédération Nationale de la Mutualité Française (www.mutualite.fr)

–Union Fédérale des Consommateurs Que Choisir (www.quechoisir.org)

The INN, a drug’s real name: leaflets are available to download for free at www.prescrire.org, along with explanations of the reasons for using the INN and the (rare) drawbacks.