



## Identifying the INN on drug packaging

Jack knows that a specific drug can have several different brand names but that fortunately each drug also has a common identifier known as the INN. INN stands for International Nonproprietary Name. The INN is a drug's real name, because it designates the active substance. It is sometimes difficult to spot the INN on the box or information leaflet.

Jack asks Martine, his local pharmacist, to show him the INN on the medication she has just dispensed. She picks up a yellow highlighter and marks the INN on the box.

–“Why don't pharmacists systematically highlight the INN on boxes?” Jack suggests. “Patients and caregivers could see it at a glance and know what drug they are using.”

Now Jack can confidently identify the drugs he takes. And, who knows, his idea to highlight the INN on all drug packaging might just catch on...

### **Ask your pharmacist to highlight the INN on your medication packaging**

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](http://www.prescrire.org))

–Fédération Nationale de la Mutualité Française ([www.mutualite.fr](http://www.mutualite.fr))

–Union Fédérale des Consommateurs Que Choisir ([www.quechoisir.org](http://www.quechoisir.org))

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