Having trouble receiving the authorized generic Concerta—again? Well, you’re in the right place. I’ve been covering this issue for six years (see list of posts). Today I nailed down all you need to know.

Quick Summary of this Post

In this post, you will

1. Learn to please stop asking for Actavis/Teva; you’ll be in for an unpleasant surprise.
2. Be warned against asking the pharmacy if they can order from the new distributor (Patrio); don’t do it. Distribution lines are too complex. The pharmacy might be able to get the authorized generic but perhaps not directly from the new distributor.
3. Be sure to read closely the section below under the heading: How to Specify the Authorized Generic Concerta
4. Find a bulleted summary of the main points at the end of this post—and a new infographic, because some readers are still having trouble understanding the details.
5. Consider getting the brand until the dust settles, if it’s affordable.
6. If you participate in an ADHD-related forum or another type of group, please share the link to this blog post. I’m seeing folks repeat tidbits from this post but out of context—and therefore unhelpful.

First, some background and context.

A Tricky Transition Time Right Now

Even though the Concerta authorized generic is available, will your particular pharmacy agree to order it? Uncertain. Some pharmacies are more helpful than others, even within the same chain (e.g. Walgreen’s, etc.).

[Update 9/24/19: Many readers are reporting success using the guidelines in this post].

Overall, pharmacies are increasingly choosing profits over customers. Regular generics tend to be more profitable than authorized generics. A reader commented on this post that, as an independent pharmacist, they lose $100 on every authorized generic Concerta prescription.

Meanwhile, the clown car of new Concerta generics expands at a dizzying rate. We get two inferior generics downgraded one year and out pop several more the next! (See Victory! Concerta Generics Downgraded)

To be clear: I receive no pharmaceutical funding of any type, and that includes from the makers/sellers of Concerta!
### Authorized Generic

- **Exactly same** as the brand-name drug
- Approved by the FDA as a NDA (New Drug Application)
- Marketed, distributed, and sold and distributed as a generic product by a private label company
- Identical to brand size, shape, smell, taste, active and inactive ingredients, etc.

### True Generic

- "Bioequivalent" to brand-name drug in dosage, safety, and strength.
- Produced and marketed under an Abbreviated New Drug Application (ANDA)

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**Once Again: What Is An Authorized (or Branded) Generic?**

A bit of background first.

Recently, Concerta users are starting to realize: The distributor of the authorized generic has changed again. From Watson to Actavis to Teva and now to Patriot Pharmaceuticals. Now, what should their prescriber specify? As always, I suggest forgoing the distributor name. It’s too subject to change. I’ll provide an alternate suggestion below.

To recap: Do you know the difference between “authorized” and regular generic medications? I’ve explained this so many times, I should tattoo it on my forehead.

I understand the confusion. Even many pharmacists and physicians can’t tell you the difference. Moreover, many also insist that regular generic medications are “exactly the same” as brand. They are not. Consumer beware.

I’ve covered it before (again, [the roundup of blog posts](https://www.adhdrigger.com)) but here are the basics:

1. **Authorized generic (aka branded generic):**

   In fact, the **authorized generic is the brand**. It’s only marketed and sold as a generic. This typically happens when a brand drug patent nears expiration. Another company strikes a deal with the brand manufacturer: We’ll delay introducing our regular generic if you agree to let us sell your brand as a generic.
That’s what happened with Concerta several years ago. The manufacturer, Jannsen, agreed to let a company named Watson sell its brand Concerta as an authorized generic. As time went on, Watson became Actavis and Teva purchased Actavis.

**Newsflash:** Now Teva-Actavis has it’s own generic (but it’s not the authorized generic).

If you are used to associating “Watson/Actavis/Teva” with the authorized generic, you’d best cut that association right now.

In the past, the prescriber could specify on the prescription: “authorized generic Concerta/Watson, etc.”—or simply OROS.

OROS is Concerta’s patented extended-release technology, owned by a company called Alza. (The osmotic-controlled release oral delivery system, OROS, takes the form of a rigid tablet with a semi-permeable outer membrane and one or more small laser-drilled holes in it.)

Since then, for a variety of reasons, it’s gotten more challenging. Pharmacies are consolidating and are less “consumer-oriented.” Some of the new generics use other osmotic technology. As a result, some pharmacists mistake “osmotic technology” for the proprietary OROS from Alza.

2. True generic:

This is what most of us regard as a generic medication. It’s a cheaper alternative to a brand medication. It is made by a different company, not the brand’s manufacturer. Even though it is often claimed to be “exactly the same” as the brand, it is not. Unfortunately, pharmacy insurance benefits increasingly force consumers to accept these generics or pay a very high cost for the brand.

For more details, read [Consumer Q&A on Concerta Generics](#)

**New Concerta Generics From At Least Seven Companies**

Over the last two years, the situation has grown even more confusing. At least seven (SEVEN!) companies released Concerta generics since July 2017:

1. Manufacturer: **ACTAVIS LABS FL**  
   Approval date: March 21, 2018  
   Strength(s): 54MG [AB]
2. Manufacturer: **ACTAVIS LABS FL**  
   Approval date: March 22, 2018  
   Strength(s): 18MG [AB], 27MG [AB], 36MG [AB], 54MG [AB]

   **NOTE:** Actavis used to be the distributor for the authorized generic Concerta; now it has its own generic.
3. Manufacturer: **ALVOGEN PINE BROOK**  
   Approval date: November 30, 2018  
   Strength(s): 18MG [AB], 27MG [AB], 36MG [AB], 54MG [AB]
4. Manufacturer: **AMNEAL PHARMS**  
   Approval date: February 1, 2018  
   Strength(s): 18MG [AB], 27MG [AB], 36MG [AB], 54MG [AB]
5. Manufacturer: **ANDOR PHARMS**  
   Approval date: April 24, 2019  
   Strength(s): 18MG [AB], 27MG [AB], 36MG [AB], 54MG [AB]
6. Manufacturer: ANI PHARMS INC  
   Approval date: July 14, 2017  
   Strength(s): 18MG [AB], 27MG [AB], 36MG [AB], 54MG [AB]

7. Manufacturer: MYLAN  
   Approval date: October 21, 2016  
   Strength(s): 18MG [AB], 27MG [AB], 36MG [AB], 54MG [AB]

8. Manufacturer: OSMOTICA  
   Approval date: July 28, 2017  
   Strength(s): 18MG [AB], 27MG [AB], 36MG [AB], 54MG [AB]

Note red arrows for two points of identifying the authorized generic Concerta: NDC code (last two numbers will differ by dosage) and distributor (Patriot Pharmaceuticals)

Who Sells the Authorized Generic Concerta Now?

The new seller is Patriot Pharmaceuticals, as shown on the label above.

(Stop! Do not rush to your pharmacy and ask that your authorized generic Concerta be ordered through Patriot! Keep reading—or skip to the section below: How to Specify the Authorized Generic Concerta)

In the old days (about 4 years ago), the companies made public these marketing deals. Consumers knew when the deal would take effect, when it was set to expire, when it expired or was re-negotiated—and how long that would last. After Teva purchased Actavis in 2016, however, I found impossible to extract any details from the company.

Since that time, Teva has removed the authorized generic from its website. Actavis/Teva now sells its own generic. The marketing deal to distribute the authorized generic has gone to Patriot Pharmaceuticals.

Patriot Pharmaceuticals Is The New Distributor

Patriot Pharmaceuticals is, in fact, a subsidiary of Concerta maker Janssen. It sells only authorized generics. As its website tagline says: One Word Stands Out—Authorized. (See blurry screen capture above.)

Yet, get this: When I called the customer service number on that website, the representative didn’t know what I meant by “authorized”! (Didn’t instill the most confidence.)
WARNING: Please do not jump on the Patriot site and think you will get useful information from its list of distributors. If you do that, you will likely end up with the wrong answers. I’ve provided all the information you need below; please look for this heading: How to Specify the Authorized Generic Concerta

Just in case visitors also don’t understand the term authorized generic, the website spells it out:

Patriot Pharmaceutical Generics are authorized for sale to trade customers by the NDA holder of the innovator product. [Note: NDA stands for New Drug Application. It the vehicle through which a company proposes that the FDA approve a new pharmaceutical for sale and marketing in the U.S.. Not a new generic of an existing brand, a new pharmaceutical altogether.]

The entire Patriot family of products is made by the same manufacturers that are approved in the NDAs of the innovator products.

The same qualities you relied on in the innovator pharmaceutical products during their branded lifecycle are now available in Patriot’s authorized generic line of products. [A branded life cycle means “before the patent expires”.]

You’ll find Patriot’s handy Q&A here: About Authorized Generics

How to Specify the Authorized Generic Concerta**

As promised, here are the updated details, including the unique identifying number, a list of distributors, and the name of the drug. I accessed this information from the U.S. National Library of Medicine “Daily Med” website.

1. Name:

Methylphenidate HCl Extended-release tablets

NOTE! You cannot rely just on the name; all the Concerta generics (including the authorized generic) are named this!

2. You Will Need The Identifying NDC Code:

Each FDA-approved medication (brand or any kind of generic) is assigned a code, the NDC (National Drug Code). Here are the numbers for Concerta’s authorized generic (the last two numbers vary by dosage):

- NDC 10147-0685-1 – 18 mg
- NDC 10147-0688-1 – 27 mg
- NDC 10147-0686-1 – 36 mg
- NDC 10147-0687-1 – 54 mg

My advice is: Ask your prescriber to specify the NDC number.

If your pharmacy says that number is not coming up in their database, they might instead find the 11-digit billing code. For example, the 36 mg replaces one hyphen with a zero. That is, NDC 10147-0686-1 has a billing code of NDC 10147068601. For the full details, click here: NDC 10147-0686-1 METHYLPHENIDATE HYDROCHLORIDE.
If your insurer or pharmacy needs more information, click here to download my highlighted copy of the Concerta Authorized Generic Label Insert.

3. Distributors:

What if—despite taking the steps above—your pharmacy benefit company still says, “But we can’t find that”?

Share with them this list of authorized distributors for the authorized generic Concerta.

NOTE! That in itself will not be useful; larger distributors might actually provide the Patriot products to certain clients. But it’s another bit of data.

4. How Should The Prescription Read Exactly?

There are no ironclad answers here. Your prescriber might have a preference. But the pharmacy might, too. If possible, try to get a straight answer from the pharmacy before speaking with your physician.

In the best of all possible worlds, the script need only contain the name of the drug! But in the case of Concerta generics, as I mentioned above, they are ALL called Methylphenidate Hydrochloride (HCl) Extended-release tablets. That makes it critical to establish which one.

To be crystal clear, my logic dictates that the prescription should read something like this (for example, for the 36 mg dose):

**Methylphenidate HCl Extended-release tablets, 36 mg, NDC 10147-0686-1 ONLY**

The “ONLY” at the end indicates, “do not substitute with another generic.”

Note: Some readers report that their pill bottles exclude the HCl (which stands for hydrochloride). If the pills say “Alza,” don’t worry about it.

5. Pay Particular Attention to the “No Substitutions” Box

**Tricky Bit:** Your prescriber must pay attention to the prescription pad checkbox that indicates “no substitutions” or “dispense as written” (it varies by state). If that is checked, pharmacists typically take that to mean, “do not substitute a generic.” That means you might get brand—at brand prices—or one in the clown car of new generics.

But what happens when the prescriber checks that box AND specifies a generic but uses the name of the brand (Concerta) instead of Methylphenidate HCl, etc.? Well, anything can happen! That’s why I think it makes sense to use my suggestion above. But again, ask your pharmacist first!

If you use a home-delivery pharmacy, consider attaching a note pointing out your request. Heck, maybe print and include this blog post. And yes, you can get stimulants via home-delivery pharmacy if you have that benefit. It is NOT illegal! One problem with local pharmacies is that they often cannot fill a 30-day prescription for stimulants of any kind; the home-delivery pharmacies have larger supplies and quicker access.

See Tip: Home Delivery of Prescribed Stimulant Medications

6. What Should The Pills Look Like? Look for Alza
NOTE: Look before you pay!

The pills should look exactly the same as the brand—because they are the brand. It’s easy. Just look for the word *Alza* on the pill. If it doesn’t say *Alza*, it’s not Concerta brand or authorized generic.

7. Must the Pharmacy Fill the Prescription As Written?

Sorry, I cannot answer that, despite solid efforts to learn. I suspect it’s going to vary by state. If you are in the know, please leave a comment. Here is an article in *U.S. Pharmacist* that might help: [Generic-Substitution Laws](https://www.uspharmacist.com/article/generic-substitution-laws).

8. What Should The Label Look Like?

Before you leave the pharmacy or open a home-delivery bottle, look for the label. It should say “Patriot Pharmaceuticals.”

Do not pay for the prescription until you check the label and the pills themselves — they should look like the pills in the photo above.

If All Else Fails, Purchase the Brand

Some folks cannot wait until the last minute and roll the dice. They need continuing dependability.

If that’s you, check your pharmacy benefit’s cost for brand Concerta. Or check out savings from [GoodRx](https://www.goodrx.com).

But Do Investigate Home-Delivery Pharmacy Benefit

Does your insurance pharmacy benefit include a home-delivery pharmacy? If so, consider using it!
If you use a home-delivery pharmacy, you might end up paying less for the brand Concerta than for generic at your storefront drugstore each month. It just depends on your policy.

Yes, this is legal! Read more here: Tip: Home Delivery of Prescribed Stimulant Medications

Summary

I know this is a lot to take in! (It was a lot to research and attempt to write about clearly, too!) I hope these quick points clarify things for you. If not, leave a question in the comments section. Readers who have followed my suggestions precisely seem to have a higher success rate.

—There are two types of generics, authorized (the brand marketed as a generic) and true (what we normally think of as generics).

—Over the years, we could purchase the brand Concerta as an authorized generic, via distributors Watson (then Actavis, then sold to Teva.)

—But now, Actavis/Teva has its own true generic, and so do six other manufacturers!

—Bottom line: Please stop referring to the branded/authorized-generic as “Actavis-Teva.” Unless you want a big surprise!

—None of the Concerta true generics utilizes Alza’s patented OROS delivery mechanism.

Many argue that without that delivery system, it cannot be a reasonable substitute for brand Concerta. My blog readers played a critical role in asking the FDA to reassess the first two Concerta generics (the FDA ended up downgrading them as not being close enough to Concerta). Here is my report on that issue: Consumer Q&A on Generic Concerta

—Some of the true generics utilize osmotic technology. But that is not the same as Alza’s patented OROS (osmotic-controlled release oral delivery system). Many pharmacists do not know this! You might need to tell them!

Tips and Strategies:

—The name for ALL the Concerta generics (the authorized-branded generic or the regular genetics) is Methylphenidate HCl Extended-release tablets. Therefore, to specify the authorized generic, you’ll need to add something else—for example, the NDC number. This is a unique number-identifier for each medication (and even each dosage strength).

—If your pharmacy says they can’t find Concerta’s authorized generic, even with the NDC code, provide them with the list of distributors above. Still no luck? Try another pharmacy—either within the same chain or a different chain. Or even a different person at the store. Some are more willing to help than others.

—Home delivery pharmacies have bigger inventory and greater access; that might be your best bet. For more info, check this link.

—If you have a choice of local pharmacies, independently owned stores typically are more service-oriented than the big chains.
But keep in mind: Pharmacies are reimbursed at a rate no higher than the cheapest generic. That means fulfilling these prescriptions can lose the pharmacy money. This can hit independents hard, big chain pharmacies less so. So, please don’t hold it against the pharmacy if they cannot help.

—So-called true generics are NOT “exactly the same as brand”—no matter what any medical professional or pharmacist tells you.

—ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS check the bottle before you pay for it at the pharmacy register. If you pay only to discover that you have a generic that you do not want, you are probably stuck.

Please Consider Filing an FDA MedWatch Complaint

—If you have tried one of these true generics and found it significantly inferior to brand/authorized-geneic Concerta, please consider filing a MedWatch complaint with the FDA. You can download a PDF or file directly online.

- More information at this link: Reporting Serious Problems to the FDA.
- Click here to go directly to the form.