

## Antipsychotic Medication Risperdal® Now Available as Generic

Risperidone is the new generic alternative to the antipsychotic brand-name medication Risperdal®. Risperidone, available in .25 mg, 0.5 mg, 1 mg, 2 mg, 3 mg and 4 mg dosages, were approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on June 30, 2008 and will be available in pharmacies soon.

Risperdal is used for the treatment of Schizophrenia, Bipolar I Disorder, and irritability associated with Autistic Disorder. Risperdal is manufactured by Janssen Ortho LLC., a division of Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Risperdal had annual sales of \$2.7 billion in 2007 according to IMS Health Sales data. The generic, risperidone is manufactured by Teva Pharmaceuticals USA with a 180-day marketing exclusivity period.

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Increased generic utilization decreases the cost of prescriptions for everyone. As we continue to see generics become available on the market, Benecard looks to promote the use of these lower cost alternatives which are just as safe and effective as their brand-name counterparts. Benecard will communicate the availability of the new generic medication, risperidone to our clients by Thursday, July 10th.

In accordance with most state laws, the change from brand Risperdal to generic risperidone will occur at the pharmacy without the prescriber's intervention since it is not actually a product change. It is suggested that patients taking Risperdal should consult with their healthcare provider to determine if there will be a benefit to changing their prescribed brand-name medication to the generic alternative.

Please note: If the plan has a mandatory generic, dispense as written, or a preferred medication program, members may experience a change in co-pay if they continue to utilize the brand-name medication Risperdal. Having a generic version of the medication available changes the status of Risperdal from a single source brand to a multi-source brand and therefore the co-pay changes.