

## What are the differences between US and UK drug names?

Prepared by UK Medicines Information ([UKMi](http://www.ukmi.nhs.uk)) pharmacists for NHS healthcare professionals  
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### Background

In modern times the generic names used for medicines in the UK and in the USA have been the same, as there has been international collaboration to ensure that all new medicines have the same name, i.e. the International Non-proprietary Name (INN). In the past, however, there have been significant differences. Also, to comply with European law, some UK medicines' names have been changed to the approved INN and this has, in some cases, resulted in differences from the US. Although not intended to be comprehensive, the list below highlights some important differences and may be helpful when searching US medical literature.

### Answer

| US name                        | UK name                         |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Acetaminophen                  | Paracetamol                     |
| Acyclovir                      | Aciclovir                       |
| Albuterol                      | Salbutamol                      |
| Amphetamine                    | Amfetamine                      |
| Anthralin                      | Dithranol                       |
| Apazone                        | Azapropazone                    |
| Beclomethasone                 | Beclometasone                   |
| Cephalexin                     | Cefalexin                       |
| Cephradine                     | Cefradine                       |
| Chlorpheniramine               | Chlorphenamine                  |
| Chlorthalidone                 | Chlortalidone                   |
| Cholestyramine                 | Colestyramine                   |
| Clomiphene                     | Clomifene                       |
| Cosyntropin                    | Tetracosactide (tetracosactrin) |
| Cromolyn sodium                | Sodium cromoglicate             |
| Cyclosporine                   | Ciclosporin                     |
| Deferoxamine                   | Desferrioxamine                 |
| Dextroamphetamine              | Dexamfetamine                   |
| Dextrose                       | Glucose                         |
| Dicyclomine                    | Dicycloverine                   |
| Divalproex sodium              | Semisodium valproate            |
| Epinephrine                    | Adrenaline/Epinephrine          |
| Ergonovine                     | Ergometrine                     |
| Estrogen                       | Oestrogen                       |
| Floxacillin                    | Flucloxacillin                  |
| Glutaral                       | Glutaraldehyde                  |
| Glyburide                      | Glibenclamide                   |
| Glycopyrrolate                 | Glycopyrronium bromide          |
| Gold sodium thiomalate         | Sodium aurothiomalate           |
| Hydroxyurea                    | Hydroxycarbamide                |
| Indomethacin                   | Indometacin                     |
| Isoproterenol                  | Isoprenaline                    |
| Leucovorin/ leucovorin calcium | Folinic acid/ calcium folinate  |

| US name                            | UK name                 |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mechlorethamine                    | Chlormethine (mustine)  |
| Meperidine                         | Pethidine               |
| Metaproterenol                     | Orciprenaline           |
| Methotrimeprazine/Levomepromazine* | Levomepromazine         |
| Mineral oil                        | Liquid paraffin         |
| Nafronyl                           | Naftidrofuryl           |
| Niacin                             | Nicotinic acid          |
| Niacinamide                        | Nicotinamide            |
| Nitroglycerin                      | Glyceryl trinitrate     |
| Norethindrone                      | Norethisterone          |
| Penicillin G                       | Benzylpenicillin        |
| Penicillin V                       | Phenoxymethylpenicillin |
| Phytonadione                       | Phytomenadione          |
| Pizotyline                         | Pizotifen               |
| Polyethylene glycols               | Macrogols               |
| Pramoxine                          | Pramocaine              |
| Propoxyphene                       | Dextropropoxyphene      |
| Psyllium                           | Ispaghula               |
| Quinacrine                         | Mepacrine               |
| Rifampin                           | Rifampicin              |
| Scopolamine                        | Hyoscine                |
| Simethicone                        | Simeticone              |
| Succinylcholine                    | Suxamethonium           |
| Sulfamethazine                     | Sulfadimidine           |
| Trimeprazine                       | Alimemazine             |
| Valacyclovir                       | Valaciclovir            |
| Valproate sodium                   | Sodium valproate        |

\*Levomepromazine is listed as methotrimeprazine in the US Pharmacopoeia and in US references, but the US approved name is levomepromazine. You may need to use both names for literature searches.

### Limitations

This is not a comprehensive list.

This Q&A will not be routinely reviewed and updated since the information it contains is not expected to change.

### Bibliography

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### Quality Assurance

#### Prepared by

Samantha Owen (based on earlier work by Simon Wills and Sue Gough), Principal Pharmacist Critical Evaluation, Southampton Medicines Advice Service, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust.

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**Checked by**

Kate Pickett, Lead Pharmacist Formulary and Medicines Q&As, Southampton Medicines Advice Service, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust.

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