

Did You Know...

Beginning January 1, 2022, brand Synthroid was excluded from the Express Scripts National Preferred Formulary. The Duke Health Plans including Duke Basic, Duke Select, and the Duke BCBS plans (Duke Care and Duke Options) utilize this formulary for outpatient prescription benefits. **Generic levothyroxine will be the preferred product.** Impacted patients are being notified by mail and/or email of this change. This change does not apply to those who are ≥ 65 years of age and covered by the Duke retiree plan.

Is this a Narrow Therapeutic Drug (NTI) and why the change?

The Food and Drug Administration does not recognize a narrow therapeutic index (NTI) designation; however, in North Carolina, levothyroxine products are considered NTI medications.¹ Pharmacies in North Carolina will need verbal or written communication to confirm the switch from Synthroid to generic levothyroxine prior to dispensing from both the prescriber and the patient. Additional lab monitoring of thyroid hormone levels may be needed as you deem clinically appropriate.



What action do prescribers need to take?

When prescribing levothyroxine to a new user:

1. Please consider writing for the generic levothyroxine product

When prescribing to a patient established on brand Synthroid:

1. Send a new prescription to the patient's pharmacy with written consent to switch to generic levothyroxine

OR

2. Provide verbal or written approval to the patient's pharmacy to switch the patient from Synthroid to levothyroxine.

OR

3. Use the Express Scripts Mail Order Pharmacy (see below)

For patients who may benefit from continuing Synthroid, providers can do the following:

1. Send the prescription to Express Scripts Mail Order Pharmacy - Express Scripts Mail Order Pharmacy will continue to dispense brand Synthroid as its house generic. **NO DAW1** (dispense as written) should be placed on the prescription. Express Scripts Mail Order Pharmacy's current policy is to dispense the brand name product when substitutions are allowed; however, this is subject to change in the future.

OR

2. Submit a clinical exception to Express Scripts on or after 1/1/2022 by calling 1-800-753-2851. For any patient who is unable to use generic levothyroxine due to a clinical reason, a clinical exception process is in place. A provider or their staff may call 1-800-753-2851, provide clinical rationale, and request coverage. The rationale will be reviewed by Express Scripts and a coverage determination will be made accordingly.

How will this impact my patients?

Patients may need education about the switch to a new manufacturer and may require additional lab monitoring of thyroid hormones as you deem clinically appropriate.

¹ "NCBOP -Pharmacist FAQs." Accessed October 27, 2021. http://www.ncbop.org/faqs/pharmacist/faq_ntidrugs.htm.