

Our History

Sandoz is a division of the Novartis Group and a global leader in generic pharmaceuticals and biosimilars. The division was established in 2003, when Novartis united all of its generics businesses under the name Sandoz – a single global brand with a long history. Since then, Sandoz has grown into a leading global generics business with annual sales of approximately USD 10 billion.

The Sandoz brand is a seal of quality, and healthcare professionals around the world trust it as a symbol of high-quality, affordable medications. It can trace its origins to a small chemical company that came into being in Basel, Switzerland, in 1886. Kern & Sandoz, as the company was initially called, focused on the production of dyes. However, within a decade it produced its first pharmaceutical substance, antipyrine, a fever-controlling agent. By 1917, the company had established its first pharmaceutical department and, in 1929, Calcium Sandoz was introduced, laying the foundation for modern calcium therapy. Calcium Sandoz went on to establish itself as one of the company's best known products and is still well represented in today's Sandoz portfolio.

Sandoz' globally leading anti-infectives and biosimilars businesses can trace their origins back to the work done at Biochemie in the 1940s and 1950

In 1939, Kern & Sandoz became Sandoz Ltd., a name it operated under for nearly sixty years. Meanwhile, across the border in 1946 post-war Austria, a company called Biochemie was founded in order to produce and supply scarce, urgently needed penicillin for the nation's populace. It was two researchers from Biochemie who, in 1951, discovered acid-resistant penicillin, which meant that for the first time, penicillin could be administered orally. The discovery drove the further development and rapid growth of the company. In 1963, Sandoz acquired Biochemie GmbH, representing the beginning of large-scale production of antibiotics and substances developed on the basis of biotechnology. The Sandoz portfolio today continues to be spearheaded by its leading global positions in biosimilars and generic antibiotics respectively. Today, Sandoz is the world's largest producer of generic antibiotics (by volume) and the only company that has been consistently producing high-quality penicillins in Europe for well over 70 years.

Over the course of the 20th century, the Sandoz brand grew consistently and came to enjoy international recognition. In 1996, the merger of Sandoz and Ciba-Geigy led to the creation of Novartis. The Sandoz brand became dormant for a few years, but did not lose its name recognition. In 2003, when Novartis united its global generics businesses under a single global brand, the name Sandoz was reestablished.

From its roots in 19th century Basel, the Sandoz brand has been transformed into a global leader in generic pharmaceuticals and biosimilars. Today, as a division of the Novartis Group, we offer approximately 1,000 molecules covering a broad range of therapeutic areas. In 2020, our products reached approximately 500 million patients.

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