

*100 years of Orion*



Building well-being. Together.



*Suomi  
Finland*  
**100**

*Orion and Finland  
celebrate their 100th  
anniversary in 2017.*

# ORION'S STORY IS THE STORY OF FINNISH WELL-BEING

The pharmaceutical company Orion and Finland celebrate their 100th anniversary in 2017. During war and in times of peace, both have built well-being, year after year.

This brochure tells the story of Orion's century.

Orion's history is closely tied to the development of the Finnish pharmaceutical industry and health care. Orion's medicines have been part of Finns' everyday life – through sickness and health – for a hundred years, and through its products, Orion has had a strong impact on Finnish society.

Orion has become what it is today by making it through great changes. The company was founded during the turbulent times of the Great War, it benefited from the boom of Finnish manufacturing brought on by the 1930s' depression

and it grew rapidly during the Second World War. On the threshold of the 1970s, Orion set its sights on the export market, and in the 1980s its focus on research brought the company success. Orion has also been able to find a profitable path despite increasing global competition.

Pharmaceutical manufacturing, the industry in which Orion operates, has played an important role in improving national health and today, old national diseases such as tuberculosis, rickets and diphtheria are almost unknown in Finland. In 2017, Finns live longer than ever and lead independent lives long into old age.

We want to thank you for being part of our important work. Let's continue to build well-being together – everywhere in the world.

# 1910s

Finland gains independence on 6 December 1917.  
The Finnish Civil War breaks out in January 1918.  
The healthcare system is in a state of chaos, and epidemics wreak havoc.

**1917:** Pharmacists Onni Turpeinen, Wikki Walkama and Eemil Turala establish Orion on 21 September.

Its first pharmaceutical facility is opened in a former vegetarian butter substitute factory in the centre of Helsinki.

Its first product is Bellistol, a rifle cleaning oil, and its first hit product is dulcin, an artificial sweetener.



# 1920s

Most Finnish children suffer from malnutrition and 44–80 % have rickets.

**1920:** The famous paediatrician Arvo Ylppö, who later becomes Chairman of the Orion Board of Directors, starts to tackle rickets and other children's diseases.

**1922:** Orion's share capital is increased through a share issue.

**1929:** A new share issue is carried out to save the company. The issue is targeted at doctors and pharmacists in particular. The new Orion is born.





# 1930s

Finland fights diphtheria. Mainly small children fall victim to the disease. The Vaccination Act of 1936 enables effective national vaccination programmes to be carried out.

**1934:** Orion relocates to larger facilities in Helsinki.

**1937:** Orion begins to prepare vaccines.

**1938:** Orion becomes the largest pharmaceutical plant in Finland, with more than 100 employees.



**Uutta!** Uusi lääke **Uutta!**

**CAMPHOR**

**Kamferitippoja tabletteina**

Orionin uudet kamferitabletit sisältävät 0,05 g puhdistettua kamferia vastaten s. 30 tippua kamferitippoja.

30 tablettia sisältävä pieni saksimukana sisältöään 6 mk.

**Lääkemäärityksen jälkeen aina "ORION"**

1934 L N:o 5



# 1940s

Pharmaceutical supply requires resourcefulness during the war. Heroin and other opiates are used as a general medication. After the war, Parliament discusses the nationalisation of pharmaceutical production and distribution.

**1944:** The Orion plant produces the first batch of penicillin in Finland. The experiment is discontinued because of the war.

**1945:** Erkki Leikola, the Managing Director of Orion, is elected as a Member of Parliament. He participates in the discussion about the future of the pharmaceutical industry in many roles.

**1948:** Orion establishes the pharmaceutical wholesale company Oriola and the technochemical company Noiro.



# 1950s

Tuberculosis has been the most significant public health problem in Finland throughout the first half of the twentieth century. New drugs are introduced to get rid of the disease.

**1952:** Orion decides to invest more strongly in the development of new drugs. Joachim Albery from Germany is hired to supervise this work.

**1953:** Orion begins to prepare Calmette, a vaccine against tuberculosis.

**1955:** Orion acquires the Chymos confectionery and beverage plant. Its operations expand into the engineering, forestry and construction industries.





# 1960s

Penicillin and other antibiotics revolutionise the treatment of many ordinary infections. Penicillin production becomes a sign of a developed country.

**1962:** Orion's new pharmaceutical plant in Espoo is completed. Four years later, a chemical plant producing raw materials is inaugurated next door.

**1966:** Diapam is introduced for the treatment of anxiety.

Antibiotics are among Orion's highest-selling products in the 1960s.



# 1970s

Finns are encouraged to improve their lifestyles: they have been using too much salt and butter. With the implementation of the new Primary Health Care Act, municipal healthcare centres constitute the core of the healthcare system.

**1970:** Fermion is established to manufacture penicillin.

**1974:** Orion Diagnostica is established to separate Orion's diagnostics business operations from its other operations.

**1974:** Orion begins to develop drugs for the treatment of cardiovascular diseases.



# 1980s

The Finnish economy is thriving to the point of overheating and becoming a casino economy. The average Finn still consumes a large amount of salt: five kilos per year.

Blood pressure drugs Sembrina and Diurex are among Orion's highest selling products in the 1980s.

**1983:** Orion introduces its first proprietary drug, the animal sedative Domosedan.

**1984:** Orion's new head office is completed in Espoo.



# 1990s

A deep recession hits Finland, with more than 500,000 people unemployed. Mental health problems are discussed more openly than before.

**1990:** Orion merges with Famos, its former competitor.

**1993:** The antidepressant Seronil is introduced and becomes a bestselling preparation.

**1995:** Orion goes public: it is listed on Helsinki stock exchange. At around the same time, it becomes the only Finnish company that is still manufacturing drugs in Finland.



# 2000s

The population of Finland is ageing rapidly. The legal amendment concerning the generic substitution of medicines enters force in 2003.

**2003:** Stalevo, a drug developed and patented by Orion for the treatment of Parkinson's disease, is authorised for marketing.

**2005:** Generic drugs become Orion's focus area, along with proprietary drugs.

**2006:** Orion successfully focuses on its core operations: drug production and diagnostics.





# 2010s

Finns are in better health than ever. The focus is increasingly on the maintenance of well-being, in addition to the treatment of diseases.

**2013:** Foreign markets represent two-thirds of Orion's net sales. Most of its research operations are carried out in Finland, and all of its own production plants are in Finland.

**2014:** Generic drugs represent nearly 50% of Orion's net sales.

**2016:** Burana, the most trusted painkiller in Finland, turns 30.



# ORION TODAY

In the course of a century Orion has grown from a modest shop producing medicines into a major Finnish pharmaceutical company that operates globally and employs some 3,400 people.

Orion develops, manufactures and markets human and veterinary pharmaceuticals, active pharmaceutical ingredients and diagnostic tests. The company is continuously developing new drugs and treatment methods. The core therapy areas of Orion's pharmaceutical R&D are central nervous system (CNS) disorders, oncology and respiratory for which Orion develops inhaled Easyhaler® pulmonary drugs.

Some things, however, have never changed: our innovation, competence and sense of community.

## TRAVEL THROUGH TIME TO EXPERIENCE ORION'S CENTURY

For more about Orion's history and stories from its past, please visit [Orion.fi](http://Orion.fi). On the website, you can find the following stories and more:

- **The man behind the research**
- **International horizons: rapid tests and Finnishness**
- **An inhaler that helps asthmatics and the atmosphere**
- **The last hope for a heart patient**
- **The long road to market**





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