

Quick Guide to Understanding Biosimilars



Biologics and Biosimilars

Biosimilars, and their reference product biologics, are medications approved and regulated by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA). They are used to treat different conditions and some cancers. A **biologic** is a medication made from living organisms, such as a plant cell or animal cell. They are complex drugs that are administered through infusion or injection. A **biosimilar** drug is a biologic that is very close but not an exact copy of the approved biologic drug.

Because biologic drugs involve living organisms, it is not possible to make exact copies of them. In fact, each batch of the same biologic drug has small variations. This means that different batches of biologics are not exactly identical. The good news is that these slight differences have no effect on how the drug works to treat your condition.

You can expect the same result from a biosimilar compared to the original drug. Biosimilars and the original biologic have the same risks and benefits, and the same strength, dosage, and administration.



Safe and Effective

Biosimilar drugs go through rigorous testing before the FDA approves them. The tests must demonstrate that they:

- * Are as safe and effective as the original biologic drugs
- * Work the same way in the body
- * Are used the same way, come in the same dose, and have the same potential side effects as the original drug

Biosimilars were developed to help increase access to treatment and offer a more cost-effective alternative. This is similar to how generic medications offer a more cost-effective alternative to brand-name medications. Often times, biologics can have a higher price resulting in access barriers related to cost and affordability.

Reasons to Consider a Biosimilar

There may be one or more reasons you want to consider receiving a biosimilar. These include:

- The available drug options at your pharmacy or infusion center
- Your insurance coverage
- Difference in cost

Biosimilars for Chronic Conditions

The first biosimilars were approved for use in the United States in 2015 and in Europe in 2006. There are now biosimilar drugs to treat many types of conditions, including:

SELECT CANCERS

Breast, Gastric, Kidney, Blood, Colorectal, and Lung cancers

AUTO-IMMUNE FORMS OF ARTHRITIS

Rheumatoid and Psoriatic

INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE

Ulcerative Colitis, Crohn's Disease, and Indeterminate Colitis

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

OSTEOPOROSIS

CHRONIC SKIN DISEASES

KIDNEY CONDITIONS

DIABETES

This list may change as new drugs and treatments become available.



Who to Contact for Questions

The retail price for a biosimilar may be less expensive than its original biologic. However, this is not always the case. Consider talking with a social worker, financial navigator, or another member of your care team about your options. They can help you explore your insurance coverage and fees. Ask about patient assistance programs and other financial services that may be able to support you.

If you have questions about your treatment plan or medications, speak to your doctor and/or pharmacist. The pharmacist is a great resource for any questions about your prescribed medications. You can speak to a pharmacist where you pick up your medications or at your hospital or treatment center. Learning what biosimilars are and how they work can help you feel more confident about your care.

Biosimilars Resources

American Cancer Society

www.Cancer.org/Cancer/Managing-Cancer/Treatment-Types/Biosimilar-Drugs/What-Are-Biosimilars.html

Food and Drug Administration

www.FDA.gov/Drugs/Biosimilars/Biosimilars-Basics-Patients

Arthritis Foundation

www.Arthritis.org

Crohn's and Colitis Foundation

www.CrohnsColitisFoundation.org/PatientsAndCaregivers/What-Is-IBD/Medication/Biosimilars



Cancer Support Community Resources

Cancer Support Helpline® — Have questions, concerns or looking for resources? Call CSC's toll-free Cancer Support Helpline (888-793-9355), available in 200 languages Mon-Thurs 11am-8pm ET and Fri 11am-6pm ET.

Open to Options® — Preparing for your next appointment? Our trained specialists can help you create a list of questions to share with your doctor. Make an appointment by calling 888-793-9355 or by contacting your local CSC or Gilda's Club.

Frankly Speaking about Cancer® — Trusted information for cancer patients and their loved ones is available through publications, online, and in-person programs.

Services at Local CSCs and Gilda's Clubs — With the help of 196 locations, CSC and Gilda's Club centers provide services free of charge to people impacted by cancer. Attend support groups, educational sessions, wellness programs, and more:
www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/Find-Location-Near-You

Cancer Experience Registry® — Help others by sharing your cancer patient or cancer caregiver experience via survey at www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org.

MyLifeLine® — CSC's secure, online community welcomes anyone impacted by cancer to easily connect with community to reduce stress, anxiety, and isolation. Create a personal network site and invite friends & family to follow your journey. And participate in our discussion forums any time of day to meet others like you who understand what you are experiencing. Join now at www.MyLifeLine.org.

Grassroots Network — Make sure your voice is heard by federal and state policy makers on issues affecting cancer patients and survivors by joining our Network at www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/Become-Advocate.

This publication is available to download and print yourself at www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/What-Biosimilar

For print copies of this publication or other information about coping with cancer, visit Orders.CancerSupportCommunity.org

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