

Biosimilar Basics for Patients

Biologics are medications made from living cells or microorganisms (such as bacteria or yeast). Most of these medications are given by injection.

When an original biologic medication is created and approved by the FDA based on initial safety and efficacy studies, it is known as a “reference” product. When the patents for that biologic medication expire, other pharmaceutical companies can make highly similar products called “biosimilars.”

Biosimilars are approved by the FDA, so you can expect the same safety and effectiveness from the biosimilar as from the reference product.

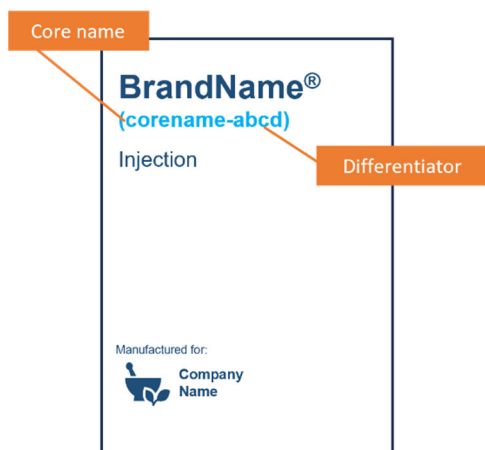
Biosimilars vs Generics

You are likely familiar with generic medications, which are exact copies of name-brand drugs in tablet or capsule form. Biologics are more complicated to manufacture, and it's not possible to make an exact copy because they are made from living sources. That's why these drugs are not considered generics.

What this means for you

If you are currently taking a reference product, your new prescription may have a new brand name.

If you look at the packaging of the new medication, you'll see the core drug name below the brand name. You should see that the first part of the core name is the same as your previous prescription. The four letters that follow the name are just there to differentiate the reference and biosimilar products.



Patient FAQ for Biosimilars

Will my dose change?

No, your dose won't change. The packaging and administration device (an auto-injector, for example) may look a little different.

Will it be as effective? What about side effects?

You should not see any difference in side effects or effectiveness with the new medication.

What if I have a question about my new medication?

Consult the medication guide that came with your medicine or ask your pharmacist.

Will it cost the same as my current medication?

Depending on your insurance plan, a biosimilar could cost you less than or the same as your current medication.

If you use copay assistance programs from the manufacturer to help cover your cost for the medication, you may find the same kind of assistance is available from the manufacturer of the biosimilar product.

Do I have to change my medication?

Depending on your insurance company's formulary (drug list), only some of the biosimilars that are on the market may be available to you. If you change to a different product, rest assured that the drug has been evaluated and approved by the FDA to be as safe and effective as the original one.

For more information, see: [Biosimilar: What Patients Need to Know | FDA](#)