

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do if I suspect that I have a side effect?

Biologics can be recognised by the body as “foreign” and may cause unwanted immune reactions (immunogenicity). This can occur with either the biosimilar or the reference biologic.

As with all drugs, side effects may occur following use. Contact your doctor if you suspect that you have a side effect from the medicine so that they can advise you on what to do.

Are biosimilars affordable?

Biologics are generally costly when they are first introduced. Biosimilars, where available, usually cost less than their reference biologic.

If you require financial assistance, please approach the medical social worker in the public healthcare institutions.

If you are currently treated with a biologic, discuss with your doctor the suitability of biosimilars for your condition.

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ARE BIOSIMILARS RIGHT FOR ME?



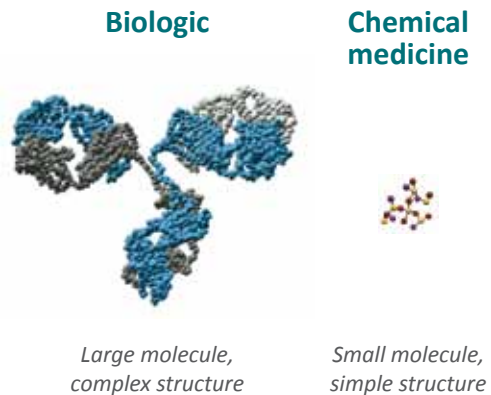
Driving better decision-making in healthcare

What are biologics?

Biologics are medicines which contain active ingredients extracted from living organisms. They have improved the treatment options in various medical conditions including cancers, diabetes, and inflammatory diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease and psoriasis.

People normally think of medicines as chemicals. The main differences between biologics and other chemical medicines are in the complexity and size of the active ingredient, and production processes.

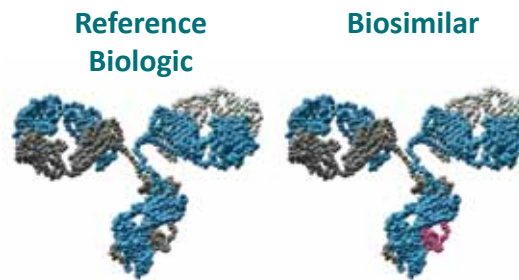
All biologics approved for use have been evaluated to be safe and effective.



What are biosimilars?

Biosimilars are also biologics that can become available when the patent expires for the reference biologic (i.e. the first biologic developed). For the past 10 years, biosimilars have been effective in treating diseases around the world. They are used to treat the same diseases, in the same way, as their reference biologics.

Biosimilars and their reference biologic are highly similar but not identical, unlike simpler chemical medicines where the active chemical ingredient is identical in both the generic and original brand of the medicine.



	Reference Biologic	Biosimilar
Effectiveness	✓	✓
Safety	✓	✓
Quality	✓	✓
Patient affordability*	\$\$\$	\$\$

*Indicative of relative prices.

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How do I know whether a biosimilar is safe?

Drug regulatory authorities, such as the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) in Singapore, require evidence from *in vitro* assays as well as clinical studies to demonstrate that there are no clinically meaningful differences between the biosimilar and its reference biologic before licensing it for use. Strict regulatory requirements also ensure that all biologics, whether biosimilar or reference biologic, are of good quality.

Is a biosimilar as effective as its reference biologic?

Biosimilars are comparable in terms of quality, safety and efficacy to their reference biologic products.

If I am being treated with the reference biologic, can I switch to the biosimilar?

Similar to any other change in prescription medicines, you should discuss switching with your doctor, who will determine if the biosimilar is clinically appropriate for your medical condition.