

Biologics and Biosimilar Medicines

A biologic is a medicine made from a living thing like a human, animal, plant, or bacteria. They treat things like:

- cancer,
- rheumatoid arthritis,
- inflammatory bowel disease, and
- anemia.

Reference Medicines

“Reference” means the “first” of this type of biologic medicine to be approved.

Biosimilar Medicine

This is medicine that is highly **similar** to a reference medicine, i.e., an existing biologic medicine. They have similar safety and treatment effects.

Benefits include:

- Lower drug prices
- Lower healthcare costs
- Better access to medicine

Naming of Biologics and Biosimilars

Names of these medicines are the same, but biosimilar medicines include four letters at the end of the product name. The brand names are not the same. See examples below.

Reference medicine (brand name)	Biosimilar medicine (brand name)
Infliximab (Remicaid [®])	Infliximab-abda (Renflexis [®]) Infliximab-dyyb (Inflectra [®])
Filgrastim (Neupogen [®])	Filgrastim-sndz (Zarxio [®])

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if biosimilars are right for you.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2021. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8000.