

Biosimilar medicines

Medicines Management

Information for Patients

Produced: October 2025

Review: October 2028

Leaflet number: 1703 Version: 1

Introduction

Biological medicines are made from living cells. We have used them for many years. We use them to treat illnesses like rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, and psoriasis. Insulin is also a biologic medicine used in diabetes.

These medicines are difficult to make because they are made of living cells. It is impossible to make an exact copy every time of the same medicine. Companies must follow very strict rules to make sure the medicines stay safe and work properly.

Biosimilar medicines

Biologic medicines can take a long time to make. It costs a lot of money to make them. When a company makes a new medicine, they get a special right called a patent. This means only they can make and sell that medicine for a while. This helps them to earn back the money they spent making it.

When the patent ends, other companies can make their own versions. These newer versions are called biosimilar or bioequivalent medicines.

Biosimilars have to pass the same strict quality tests as the original brand. They work in the same way and treat the same illnesses.

Do they work as well?

Yes. Experts check biosimilars carefully to make sure they work the same as the original medicine.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

Are bioequivalent medicines as safe as the original biologic medicines?

Yes. Specialists have used biosimilars safely for more than 15 years. They are fully tested to make sure they work and are safe.

Why do we use biosimilars?

Biosimilars cost the NHS much less money. This means we can treat more patients with the best available medicines earlier. For example, using biosimilar 'mab' medicines helps treat people with early rheumatoid arthritis before it gets worse.

How do we choose which product to use?

You and your specialist will talk about the best treatment for you. This is called informed consent. Once your specialist team gives you a medicine, you can be sure it has strict quality standards checks in the UK.

Will I notice a difference?

The name and packaging will look different between biosimilar brands. The medicine inside is the same.

Why do we change your medicine to a different brand?

- Some medicines come in different brands. They work the same and are just as safe. We may change to a different brand of the same medicine over time.
- Your specialist team will ask for your agreement (consent) before prescribing the medicine for the first time. They will:
 - explain to you how it works,
 - what to expect,
 - how to manage any side effects.
- We will give you the best value product we have at that time.
- We may give you a different brand of the same medicine over the course of your treatment. We will not need to ask you for your consent each time.
- We will keep a record of which brand you get. You can ask to find out which brand we are using.



When does the hospital change brands?

Hospitals change brands when:

- A new biosimilar becomes available
- A contract changes
- There is a shortage of one brand

Hospitals use up any old stock first to avoid waste. This may cause a short delay between telling you about a brand change and you getting it.

What do I do if I have queries?

Talk to your specialist team or the hospital pharmacist about your treatment. They will listen carefully to your questions and give you more information. They will help you find support you might need. We welcome questions and are here to support you.

Contact details:

Contact your specialist team in hospital if have any questions.

Or the pharmacy medicines information line on: **0116 258 6491**

Reference

Adapted with permission from "Bioequivalent medicines Information for patients" 2023, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS trust version 1. Available at <https://flipbooks.leedsth.nhs.uk/LN05202.pdf>. Accessed 25/06/2025

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net