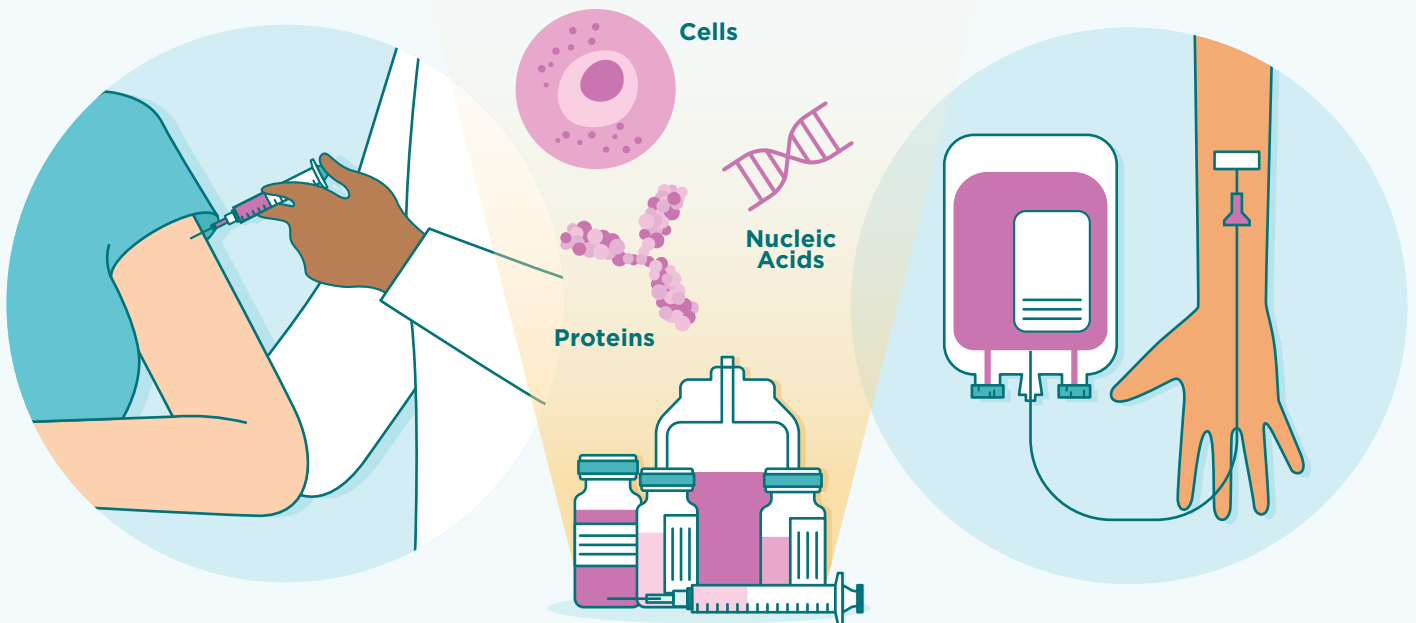




# BIOSIMILARS:

## A SAFE, EFFECTIVE AND MORE AFFORDABLE OPTION FOR PATIENTS

### WHAT ARE BIOLOGICAL MEDICINES?



Biological medicines (**biologics**) contain active ingredients made by **living cells**. They are used to **treat** diseases such as **cancer**, **diabetes**, and **inflammatory conditions** including rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. They are usually given as an **injection** or a **slow drip** (infusion) into the veins.

### BIOSIMILARS ARE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

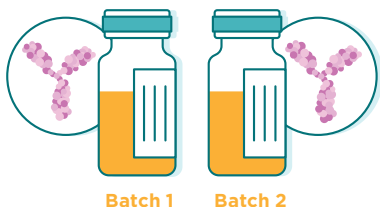
Biosimilars are also **biologics**. They are **highly similar** to the first biologic approved for use (**reference biologic**). Biosimilars become **available** for patients to use once the patent on the reference biologic has expired. For more than **15 years**, biosimilars have been effective in treating diseases around the world.



Before biosimilars are approved for use in Singapore, they are compared to the reference biologic by the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)<sup>1</sup>, to confirm that they are **safe** and provide the **same** health benefits to patients.



### DID YOU KNOW?



**No** two batches of biologics are **exactly** the same.

These differences arise from:



**Natural variation** in the living cells that make the biologic



Differences in **manufacturing processes**

**Strict controls** are always in place during manufacturing to **ensure** that minor differences do not affect the safety and efficacy of these medicines.

## BENEFITS FOR PATIENTS

Biosimilars are used to treat the **same diseases** and are taken in the **same way** as the reference biologics. They enable patients to have **more treatment options** that are **effective** and **affordable**.

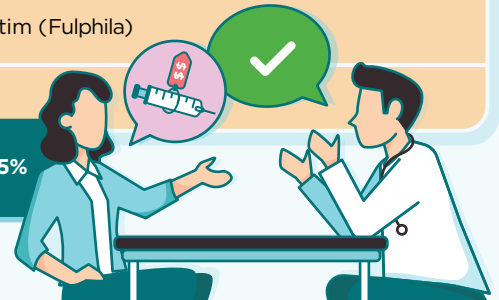


Competition tends to **lower** the cost of many everyday items such as food, electronics and services. Biosimilars enhance competition among biological medicines<sup>2</sup> as they offer more treatment choices with the **same** health benefits and usually **cost less** than their reference biologic. This helps make treatment **more affordable** for patients.

## SUBSIDISED BIOSIMILARS ARE AVAILABLE FOR DIFFERENT CONDITIONS

Medical condition	Drug name (subsidised biosimilar brand) <sup>3</sup>
Rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammatory conditions	<span>✓</span> Adalimumab (Amgevita) <span>✓</span> Infliximab (Ixifi, Remsima) <span>✓</span> Rituximab (Truxima)
Cancer	<span>✓</span> Bevacizumab (Mvasi) <span>✓</span> Rituximab (Truxima) <span>✓</span> Trastuzumab (Herzuma, Ogivri)
Low white blood cell count	<span>✓</span> Filgrastim (all brands) <span>✓</span> Pegfilgrastim (Fulphila)
Growth disturbances	<span>✓</span> Somatropin (all brands)

Treatment costs are subsidised by **40% to 75%** for eligible patients.



## KEY MESSAGES

Biosimilars are **safe** and **effective**. Some biosimilars have been recommended for subsidy because they provide **good value for money**.

Your doctor might advise you to **switch** from a reference biologic to a biosimilar to make your treatment more affordable. Talk to your doctor to **discuss** which treatment is suitable for you.

### Sources

1. [www.hsa.gov.sg/therapeutic-products/register/guides/biosimilar-products](http://www.hsa.gov.sg/therapeutic-products/register/guides/biosimilar-products)
2. The International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities (ICMRA) statement about confidence in biosimilar products (for patients and the public). July 2019.
3. [www.moh.gov.sg/cost-financing/healthcare-schemes-subsidies/drug-subsidies-schemes](http://www.moh.gov.sg/cost-financing/healthcare-schemes-subsidies/drug-subsidies-schemes)



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