

Biosimilars Discussion Guide

Healthcare providers use biosimilars to treat cancer and control treatment side effects. Biosimilars are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

This fact sheet answers common questions about biosimilars.

What are biosimilars?

Biosimilars are highly similar and equally effective versions of FDA-approved biologic drugs. Biologic drugs and biosimilars are created in laboratories from living organisms, such as human or animal cells.

Like originator biologic drugs, healthcare providers currently use biosimilars to treat:

- Autoimmune diseases
- Breast cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Colorectal cancer
- Low white and red blood cell levels
- Non-Hodgkin lymphoma
- Stomach cancer

Biosimilars add to the number of treatment options that patients and providers can choose from. Biosimilars may also help lower the cost of medical care.

How are biosimilars used in cancer care?

Providers use biosimilars the same way they use biologic drugs. Your provider may also call the originator biologic drug a "reference product." If you take a biosimilar, you take it in the same way and amount as the reference product.

Are biosimilars safe and effective?

Yes. The FDA regulates and approves biosimilars. Biosimilars prescribed by providers are as safe and effective as biologic drugs.

What are the potential side effects?

The potential side effects from biosimilars are the same as biologic drugs. Each biosimilar approved by the FDA is equally safe and effective as the reference product.

Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Team:

How do you use biosimilars in my cancer care?

How can we safely lower the cost of my cancer treatment?

How can we control my cancer treatment side effects?

How Similar?

BIOLOGIC DRUGS

- ✓ FDA-approved
- ✓ Equally safe and effective
- ✓ Used by your provider to treat cancer or control treatment side effects in the same way
- ✓ Same potential side effects

BIOSIMILARS

- ✓ FDA-approved
- ✓ Equally safe and effective
- ✓ Used by your provider to treat cancer or control treatment side effects in the same way
- ✓ Same potential side effects



How are biosimilars made?

Like biologic drugs, making biosimilars is complex and involves many steps. But the result is a highly similar and equally effective drug. Biosimilars given by providers are created in FDA-licensed facilities.

For more information about biosimilars,

visit: [fda.gov/drugs/biosimilars/patient-materials](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/biosimilars/patient-materials)

Questions or Concerns About Your Care?

Contact:

Biosimilars Being Used for My Care:

Organizations for Cancer Information and Support

American Cancer Society
[cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)
1.800.227.2345

CancerCare
[cancercare.org](https://www.cancercare.org)
1.800.813.4673

Cancer Support Community
[cancersupportcommunity.org](https://www.cancersupportcommunity.org)
1.888.793.9355

National Cancer Institute
[cancer.gov](https://www.cancer.gov)
1.800.422.6237

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The **Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC)** is the leading education and advocacy organization for the cancer care community. For more information, visit [accc-cancer.org](https://www.accc-cancer.org). Follow us on social media; read our blog, ACCCBuzz; tune in to our CANCER BUZZ podcast; and view our CANCER BUZZ TV channel.

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