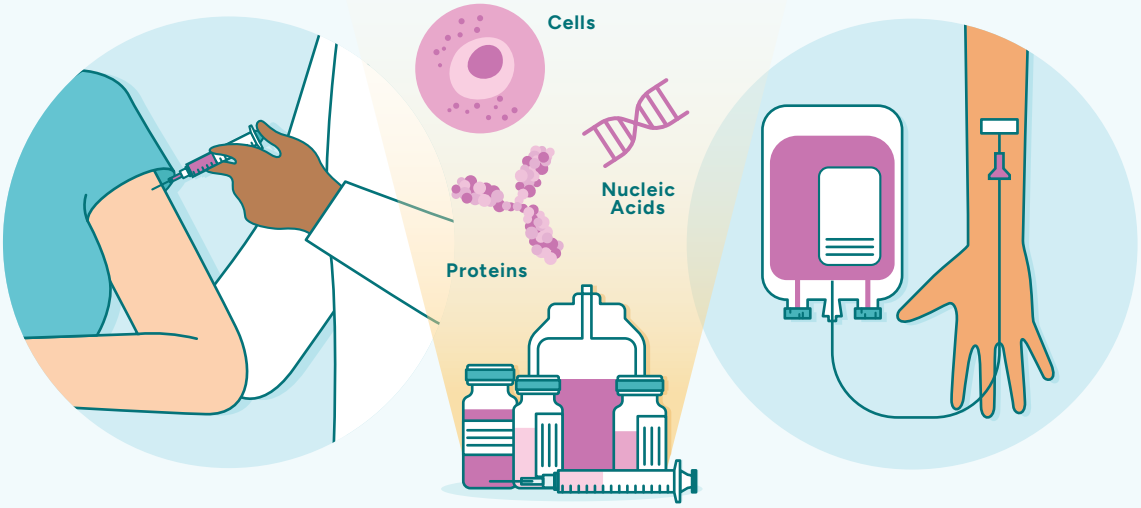
BIOSIMILARS:
A SAFE, EFFECTIVE AND MORE AFFORDABLE OPTION FOR PATIENTS

HSA Health Sciences Authority

ACE agency for care effectiveness

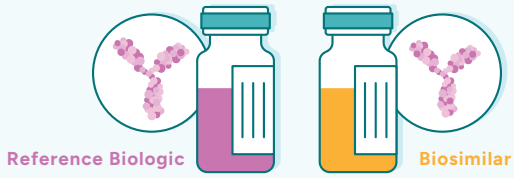
WHAT ARE BIOLOGICAL MEDICINES?



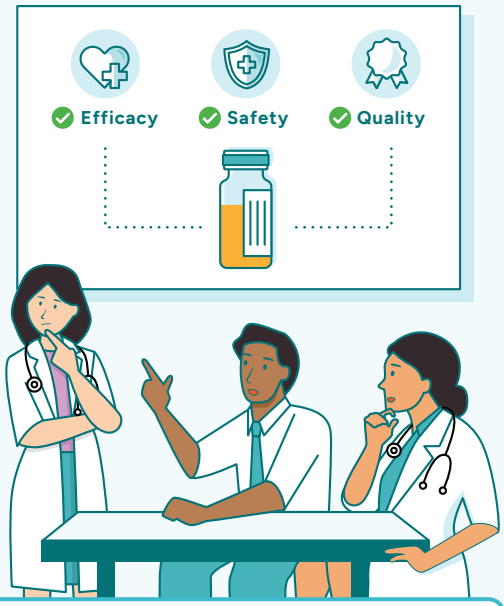
Biological medicines (**biologics**) contain active ingredients made by **living cells**. They are used to **treat** diseases such as **cancer**, **diabetes**, **osteoporosis**, and **inflammatory conditions** including asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. 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, which is known as the **reference biologic** or bio-originator. Biosimilars become **available** for patients to use once the patent of the reference biologic has expired. They have been used around the world for almost **20 years** and have been effective in treating a wide range of diseases.



Before biosimilars can be used in Singapore, manufacturers are required to submit data to the **Health Sciences Authority** (HSA) showing that they provide the same therapeutic benefits, safety and quality as the reference biologics. After approval, HSA continues to monitor biosimilars through post-marketing surveillance to ensure they remain safe for patients to use.[1]



DID YOU KNOW?



No two batches of biologics are identical because they are produced using living cells, which naturally introduce small variations during manufacturing.

However, strict quality controls and consistent manufacturing processes ensure that every batch is safe, effective and works the same way for patients.

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**.



Same way of taking the medicine



More choice



Better access to affordable treatments

Competition tends to **lower** the cost of many everyday items such as food, electronics and services. Biosimilars enhance competition among biological medicines[2] as they offer more treatment choices with the **same** health benefits and usually **cost less** than their reference biologic.

The availability of lower-cost biosimilars has made treatment more affordable, enabling **more patients** to benefit from these therapies.[3]

SUBSIDISED BIOSIMILARS ARE AVAILABLE FOR DIFFERENT CONDITIONS

Medical condition*	Drug name (subsidised biosimilar brand)[4]
Rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammatory conditions	✓ Adalimumab (Amgevita) ✓ Infliximab (Ixifi, Remsima) ✓ Rituximab (Truxima) ✓ Ustekinumab (Steqeyma)
Cancer	✓ Bevacizumab (Mvasi) ✓ Rituximab (Truxima) ✓ Trastuzumab (Herzuma, Ogivri)
Low white blood cell count	✓ Filgrastim ✓ Pegfilgrastim (Fulphila)
Asthma	✓ Omalizumab (Omlyclo)
Growth disturbances	✓ Somatropin
Osteoporosis	✓ Teriparatide (Sondelbay)

*List is not exhaustive. Other conditions may also be treated with biosimilars.

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. go.gov.sg/tp-guidance-documents
2. The International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities (ICMRA) statement about confidence in biosimilar products (for patients and the public). July 2019.
3. Tan SH et al., *Impact of value-driven healthcare strategies for biosimilar adoption: the Singapore story*, 2024
4. www.moh.gov.sg/managing-expenses/schemes-and-subsidies/list-of-subsidised-drugs

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