



Transition Pathway Brochure for IBD Patients

Helping inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) patients
best understand transitioning/switching from a
reference biologic to a biosimilar

Date: 2021

This brochure was created by the Canadian Digestive Health Foundation,
in collaboration with health care professionals.

CDHF Canadian
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Foundation

Biosimilars in Canada

What is a biosimilar?

A biosimilar is a drug proven to be highly similar to its reference biologic and has been authorized for sale in Canada.

Biosimilars can only come to market after the 20-year patient protection on a reference biologic drug has ended.

Are biosimilars the same as reference biologics?

No. Reference biologics and biosimilars are complex molecules made from living cells. Due to this fact, biosimilars are highly similar, but not identical versions, of their reference biologic drugs.

Biosimilars are NOT the same as generic drugs

Generic medications are exact copies of a brand-name drug. Generics contain the same chemical substance(s) as branded drugs and provide the same therapeutic effect. Biosimilars are similar to but not exact copies of a reference biologic. The difference lies in the inactive components within the product. Because biologics and biosimilars are made with living cells, and not chemicals, they are more complex and have a natural variability.

These slight variations exist within all biologic and biosimilar medications, including batches of reference biologics that have been on the market for years. Biologics and biosimilars must meet Health Canada's safety, immunogenicity*, and efficacy requirements.

As well, it must be developed and manufactured following the same strict quality requirements as any other biologic; therefore delivering the same therapeutic benefits as its reference biologic.

* The body's ability to prompt an immune response to a foreign substance. In this case, the immune response would be to a biologic or biosimilar medication. When this occurs, it means the medication will no longer be effective.



Transitioning to a biosimilar is safe and effective

To be approved in Canada, a biosimilar must be proven to have no clinically meaningful difference to its reference biologic. What does this mean? Well, biosimilars **MUST** show no differences in outcomes for patients taking a biosimilar, when comparing it to patients taking the reference biologic drug. Rigorous standards for authorization by Health Canada mean that patients and health care providers can have the same confidence in the quality, safety and efficacy of a biosimilar.

Health Canada says switching from a biologic to a biosimilar is acceptable and recommends that the decision to switch be made by the physician or prescriber and patient based on clinical evidence and any policies of the province in which you live. and recommends that the decision to switch be made by the physician or prescriber and patient based on clinical evidence and any policies of the province in which you live.

Reasons for Transitioning/Switching to a Biosimilar:

Medical transition

Occurs when a patient, not doing well on their current reference biologic or biosimilar is transitioned/switched to another reference biologic or biosimilar to regain maximum disease control.

Policy transition

Occurs when a public or private drug plan's reimbursement policy changes, and requires patients to transition/switch from their reference biologic to a biosimilar. In some provinces, health care plans are enforcing a switch to the biosimilar version before the end of the transition period to avoid any disruption to your coverage.

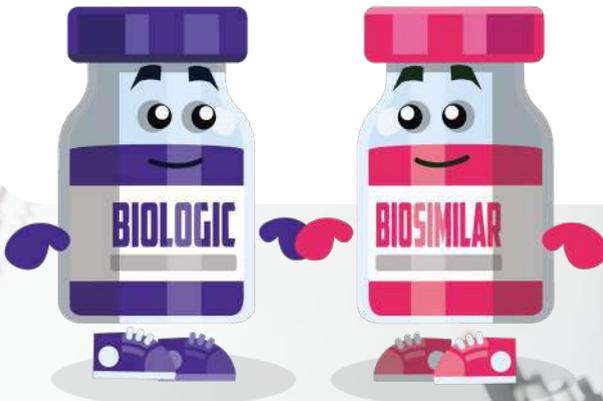
Before switching, both gastroenterologists and their patients must be fully informed about the reimbursement policy changes and have all available information about the biosimilar.

Are there any research studies on biosimilars?

There are more than 100 research studies on patients with inflammatory arthritis, gastrointestinal and skin disease who have successfully transitioned from an anti-TNF reference inhibitor biologic to its TNF inhibitor biologic biosimilar.

Benefits of Biosimilars

- 1** There will be cost savings to drug plans and patients who may have to pay out of pocket expenses associated with drug costs., alleviating stress and financial burden.
- 2** There's a considerable strain on our health care system, and it's likely not sustainable. We need to come up with inventive strategies to save costs but still provide excellent care for our patients. Biosimilars may be a way that we can achieve this.
- 3** Provincial governments require that biosimilar manufacturers provide a patient support program that provides a similar level of support of those offered by reference biologic manufacturer.
- 4** Treated with he originator, you are unlikely to experience any new side effects after transitioning. As always, your gastroenterologist will monitor your treatment carefully, just like they did with your previous biologic, whether it was an originator or a biosimilar.



Recent report from the Federal Government (PMPRB, Patent Medicines Pricing Review Board) estimated that biosimilars have the potential to save Canadian Drug Plans up to \$1.8 Billion PER YEAR

Patient concerns of biosimilars

What we know

Will all biosimilars require the same rigorous scientific testing as the reference biologic?

Yes. Rigorous standards for authorization by Health Canada mean that patients and health care providers can have the same confidence in the quality, safety and efficacy of a biosimilar.

Will there be an increased risk of immunogenicity* with multiple switches?

Health Canada supports the one time switch from a reference biologic to a biosimilar, and no differences are expected in safety efficacy or immunogenicity when patients switch to a biosimilar. Health Canada does not have a position on patients undergoing multiple switches between biosimilars. Current research on multiple switches between different biosimilars is on-going.

Will I have to go to a new infusion clinic to receive my biosimilar treatment?

Maybe. Some patients may have to visit a new infusion clinic to receive the biosimilar, while others maybe able to receive the biosimilar in their current infusion clinic.

Will investments into new drug development and scientific advancement continue?
Will the government re-invest potential savings into health care so we can continue to improve care?

BC Biosimilar Transition policy savings (\$120 Million over 3 years) were reinvested to improve patient care. Examples include the reimbursement of new, innovative drugs, additional nursing support for all inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) patients and for the fecal calprotectin diagnostic test to be covered for all IBD patients in the province.

A spiral-bound notebook is shown in the top left corner, with its pages and metal spiral binding visible. The background of the entire page is a vibrant teal and blue pattern with abstract, rounded shapes.

Empower yourself, learn all you can.

We encourage you to ask questions.
Speak to your gastroenterologist to learn more and be informed!

Some questions to consider:

- Has this biosimilar been studied in a rigorous way in patients with IBD?
- What am I concerned about?
- Is my disease stable enough to make a transition/switch to a biosimilar?
- Are there any challenges I should be aware of in the transitioning process?

This brochure was made possible through the financial support of Merck Canada Inc. and the opinions expressed are those of its authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of Merck Canada Inc

Biosimilar content was provided by Biosim-Exchange, and is part of the Arthritis Consumer Experts' family of education programs

Have you already transitioned/switched?

If you have already transitioned/switched, CDHF wants to hear from you. Please fill out our online survey to help us understand the recent experiences of people living in Canada who have switched/transitioned from Remicade® (infliximab) to the biosimilar versions of infliximab:

Inflectra® and Renflexis™. Type the following URL into your browser to get started:

<https://conta.cc/2oMIUMv>



For more information, visit [CDHF.ca](https://www.cdhf.ca).

CDHF is the official Foundation of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG). We are directly connected to Canada's leading digestive health experts, physicians, scientists and other health care professionals. You can trust us to provide you with credible, science-based information that is up to date and unbiased.