Biosimilar Basics

Biosimilars are a type of biologic medication that is safe and effective for treating many illnesses, such as chronic skin and bowel diseases, arthritis, diabetes, kidney conditions, macular degeneration, and some cancers.

Most biologic medications have minor differences between batches because they generally are made from living sources (such as animal cells, bacteria or yeast). Biologics are developed using advanced science and usually given by injection.

Biosimilars are FDA-approved medications that are very similar, but not identical, to another medication — the original biologic already approved by FDA.

A biosimilar and its original biologic are made from the same types of sources — and have the same treatment risks and benefits.

Biosimilars can be made by multiple companies which may lower their cost — similar to generic drugs. Biosimilars are like generics in some ways but different in others.

**Biosimilars**
- Generally made from living sources
- Require a specialized process to produce
- Very similar, but not identical, to original biologics
- Usually less expensive than original biologics

**Generics**
- Generally made from chemicals
- Have a simpler process to copy
- Copy of brand-name drugs
- Usually less expensive than brand-name drugs

Biosimilars may provide patients with more access to important treatments and an opportunity to save money.

Biosimilars are approved by FDA after a careful review of data, studies, and tests conducted by companies.

FDA monitors the safety and effectiveness of all medications after their approval.

To learn more, visit [www.FDA.gov/biosimilars](http://www.FDA.gov/biosimilars)