

# Questions to Ask Your Doctor About Biologics & Biosimilars

Want to learn more about biologics and biosimilars and why they're important? Download [10 Things You Need to Know About Biologics & Biosimilars](#) to learn what they are and how they're relevant to your arthritis treatment.

## If You've Never Taken a Biologic or Biosimilar \*

If you've been taking a traditional disease-modifying drug (DMARD) to control your arthritis and it hasn't been effective enough or if you have a bad reaction to it, your doctor might recommend adding or switching to a biologic. Biologics are powerful drugs that act on the immune system to tame the out-of-control inflammation that drives your disease. You might be prescribed one of the "reference products" (original biologics) or its biosimilar — a drug that is very similar to the reference biologic but possibly less expensive.

### Ask Your Doctor:

- How does this drug work and why do I need it?
- What should I expect when I start it?
- How is it administered?
- If I have to do self-injection, how does that work and how should I store the medicine?
- How often will I take it and what is the dose?
- What side effects might I have?
- What should I do if I have side effects?
- What if I miss a dose?
- How soon will I know if this medication is going to work for me?
- How much will this cost me out of pocket?
- Is there financial assistance or samples?
- What if I decide not to take this medication?

\*All biologics and biosimilars are FDA-approved. Always tell your doctor before starting a biologic if you are pregnant, nursing or plan to become pregnant. Some biologics should not be taken under these circumstances.

## If You're Switching From an a Reference Product to Its Biosimilar

Biosimilars are expected to cost less than their reference products, so your doctor might recommend — or your insurance company might require you — to switch to one from your name-brand biologic, even if you are stable on your current medication.

If a biosimilar has been approved by the FDA as "interchangeable," your pharmacist could substitute it for the biologic you normally take without your permission. But data show that this is safe, so you shouldn't be concerned about it. States' laws vary about whether other biosimilars may be switched for reference products. If you are switching — or think your medication might be switched — from your current biologic to its biosimilar, ask your doctor the following.

### Ask Your Doctor:

- What's the advantage of switching to a biosimilar?
- Is it possible that my current drug will be switched without your approval?
- Could it be less effective than my current biologic?
- Will I have lower out-of-pocket costs with the new drug?
- Is there financial assistance or samples for this drug?
- Will the side effects and risks be different from my current medication?
- What if I want or need to stay with my current biologic?
- Will I need a new dosing schedule if I switch to the biosimilar?

## If You're Trying a Different Biologic or Biosimilar

If your current biologic isn't working, your doctor may switch you to a different reference product or its biosimilar.

### Ask Your Doctor:

- I'm worried that this one won't work any better than my last one. Why do you think it's a good choice?
- Is this drug as safe as my current one?
- It is administered the same way?
- What should I expect when I start it?
- What side effects should I be aware of that my current drug doesn't have?
- What should I do if I experience side effects?
- How does the out-of-pocket cost compare with my last drug?
- Is there financial assistance or samples?