

# Biosimilar Medicines

## Understanding your recent medicine change

Medicine changes may be considered when different options become available.

In the VA health system, **one medicine may be selected** as the preferred medicine because it has been proven to be safe and effective and is available at a lower cost.



## What are biologic and biosimilar medicines?



**A biologic medicine is** an FDA-approved medicine made from natural and living sources, such as animal and plant cells, bacteria, or yeast.

**A biosimilar medicine is a type of biologic medicine.** It is an FDA-approved medicine that is very similar, but not exactly the same as, the original biologic medicine.

The FDA has concluded there are no meaningful differences in terms of safety or efficacy between biosimilar and original biologic medicines.

**Examples:**

- Insulin glargine-yfgn (Semglee®) is a biosimilar to insulin glargine (Lantus®)
- Infliximab-abda (Renflexis®) is a biosimilar to infliximab (Remicade®)

## Biosimilars and Original Biologic Medications



Same effects and benefits



Same route of administration



Same potential side effects

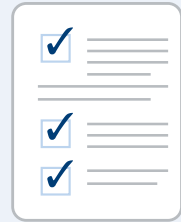


Same strength and dosage

## Questions you may have:

### My previous medicine was working. Why is my medicine being changed now?

- Medication changes can happen when **there is more than one FDA-approved option** to treat the same condition. Sometimes **the VA selects one** of the options as the preferred agent.
- The VA will only select a **preferred medicine** if it has been shown to be safe and equally effective.
- Using the preferred medicine is expected to **provide the same clinical benefits** as the original biologic medicine.



### Will this new medicine cause side effects?

- **All medicines can cause side effects.** Biosimilar and biologic medicines are expected to have the same possible side effects.
- Switching to a biosimilar medicine is **not expected to cause new or worsening** side effects.



### What should I do if I experience side effects from my medicine?

- If you experience side effects from your medicine, let your VA healthcare team know. **The VA monitors reported side effects from medicines** through the VA Adverse Drug Event Reporting System.



## Things to know while taking this new medicine:



As with any medicine, it is **important to follow the dosing instructions** provided to you. If needed, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist to clarify the instructions.



You will **continue to see your healthcare team** as normally scheduled.



If you have any questions about your new medicine, **please reach out** to your VA healthcare team.