Manitoba
Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care

Manitoba Biosimilars Initiative
Guide for Patients

Overview

The Manitoba Biosimilars Initiative was announced to improve the uptake of biosimilar drugs.

Biosimilars present a significant opportunity for cost savings and health system sustainability while providing safe and effective medication options. The Biosimilars Initiative will support ongoing access to public drug coverage and new drug benefits for Manitobans.

The Manitoba Biosimilars Initiative will transition provincial drug plan coverage of biologic medications to biosimilar versions, where they are available.

You will need to transition to a biosimilar version of your biologic medication, in order to maintain Pharmacare or other provincial drug plan coverage.

Manitoba is joining public drug plans across Canada, including those in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, and Yukon, in implementing a Biosimilars Initiative as part of responsible and sustainable drug plan management.

About Biologic and Biosimilar Drugs

Biologic drugs are made from living organisms or their cells. They differ from most other drugs in that they are not made by chemical synthesis. Examples of biologic drugs include insulins, blood products, antibodies, and growth hormones. Biologics treat many different conditions, including Crohn's and colitis, diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Reference biologics (sometimes called "originator" or "innovator" biologics) are the first version of a biologic drug to be made and sold.

Biosimilars are the next versions of a biologic drug to be made and sold after the reference biologic's patent expires. Biosimilars work in the same way as the reference biologic drug but are less costly.

Biosimilars are as effective and safe as reference biologics.

- You can expect the same results from biosimilars as the reference biologic you are familiar with.

- Biosimilars are regulated and monitored by Health Canada. Clinical studies show that biosimilars have the same efficacy and safety as the reference biologic drug.
- In Canada and internationally, there have not been any unexpected safety issues identified for biosimilars.

About Manitoba's Biosimilar Initiative

If you currently use a reference biologic drug listed in the table below and you receive coverage for this medication under Pharmacare or another provincial drug plan, you may be affected by Manitoba's Biosimilars Initiative.

If you are using a reference biologic with an available biosimilar version, you will need to start using a biosimilar by the transition period end date, in order to maintain coverage.

From now until the end of the transition period, you will be eligible for coverage of both the reference biologic drug and any listed biosimilar(s), to allow for time to talk to your health care provider and get a new prescription for the biosimilar.

After the end of the announced transition period, the reference biologic drug will no longer be covered under Pharmacare and other provincial drug plans.

Please note: You will continue to be able to access coverage of your reference biologic medication if a suitable biosimilar format is not available.

Products Included in the Biosimilars Initiative

Drug Name	**Reference Biologic** (Switch from)	**Biosimilar** (Switch to)	**Health Conditions***	**Transition Period End Date**
Adalimumab	Humira	Abrilada Amgevita Hadlima Hulio Hyrimoz Idacio Simlandi Yuflyma	Ankylosing Spondylitis Crohn's Disease Hidradenitis Suppurativa Plaque Psoriasis Polyarticular Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis Psoriatic Arthritis Rheumatoid Arthritis Ulcerative Colitis	January 31, 2025

Drug Name	Reference Biologic (Switch from)	Biosimilar (Switch to)	Health Conditions*	Transition Period End Date
Enoxaparin	Lovenox	Elonox Elonox HP Inclunox Inclunox HP Noromby Noromby HP Resdesca Resdesca HP	Prevention and treatment of venous thromboembolic events	January 31, 2025
Etanercept	Enbrel	Brenzys Erelzi	Ankylosing Spondylitis Plaque Psoriasis Polyarticular Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis Psoriatic Arthritis Rheumatoid Arthritis	January 31, 2025
Filgrastim	Neupogen	Grastofil Nivestym Nypozi	Prevention and treatment of neutropenia	January 31, 2025
Glatiramer (a non-biologic complex drug)	Copaxone	Glatect	Multiple Sclerosis	January 31, 2025
Infliximab	Remicade	Avsola Inflectra Renflexis	Ankylosing Spondylitis Crohn's Disease Plaque Psoriasis Psoriatic Arthritis Rheumatoid Arthritis Ulcerative Colitis	January 31, 2025
Insulin aspart	NovoRapid	Kirsty Trurapi	Diabetes	January 31, 2025

Drug Name	Reference Biologic (Switch from)	Biosimilar (Switch to)	Health Conditions*	Transition Period End Date
Insulin glargine	Lantus	Basaglar Semglee	Diabetes	January 31, 2025
Insulin lispro (100 units/mL)	Humalog	Admelog	Diabetes	January 31, 2025
Rituximab	Rituxan	Riximyo Ruxience Truxima	Granulomatosis with Polyangiitis Microscopic Polyangiitis Rheumatoid Arthritis	January 31, 2025

**Transition also applies for other conditions, funded on a case-by-case basis, which may not appear in the above list.*

Updates to this product list will be posted online here:
https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/pharmacare/biosimilars.html

Please note:

- Coverage of Humalog 200 units/mL will continue to be available for patients who need a higher concentration formula, as there is no equivalent biosimilar version available at this time.
- Coverage of Lantus cartridges will continue to be available for pediatric patients who require a half-unit pen device to administer insulin glargine.
- Coverage of NovoRapid vials will continue to be available for patients who use vials for an insulin pump, while biosimilars undergo insulin pump certification, and until these biosimilar(s) in a vial format are available / listed on the Manitoba Drug Benefits Formulary.
- Admelog is compatible with various insulin pump models from Insulet (Omnipod), Medtronic, Tandem, and Ypsomed.
- Individuals with questions about insulin compatibility with specific insulin pump models are encouraged to contact the insulin pump manufacturer.

Transitioning to a Biosimilar

If you are using a reference biologic drug included in the Biosimilars Initiative and you receive Pharmacare or other provincial drug plan coverage for this medication, you should:

- Follow-up with the health care provider who prescribes your reference biologic at your next scheduled appointment. Contact their office if you do not have an appointment before the transition period end date.
- Request a new prescription for the biosimilar version of your medication.
- Discuss your questions about biosimilars with your health care provider.

In some cases, you may have the option to enroll in a patient support program. Your health care provider can assist you with this process.

Exceptions

In limited circumstances, some patients may need to continue using a reference biologic for medical reasons. Exceptions to Manitoba's Biosimilars Initiative may be considered for individual patients to continue to receive coverage of a reference biologic after the transition period end date. Your prescriber can submit a request and clinical information for review on a case-by-case basis.

Additional Information

For additional information on the Manitoba Biosimilars Initiative, please visit:
https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/pharmacare/biosimilars.html

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Biosimilars Initiative can be found here:
https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/pharmacare/docs/patient-faq.pdf