

# Biosimilar drugs

## WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW IS PREMIERA BLUE CROSS SUPPORTING THEM?

There has been a lot of buzz around the topic of biosimilars, but what are they and if your provider prescribes one, should you agree to it?

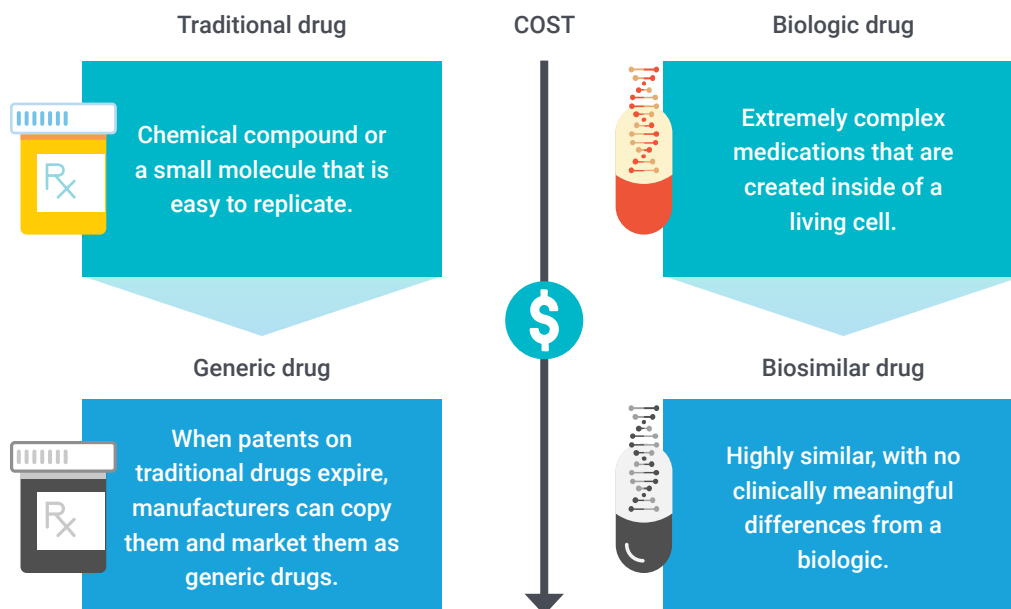
### What do they treat?

Biologic drugs and biosimilars are used to treat cancer, inflammatory conditions, diabetes, and other conditions.

### What's the difference?

In short, a biosimilar is like a generic drug but for a biologic.

A biologic is the brand name drug (like Humira) and the biosimilar is similar to the generic version. There are no meaningful differences between the two.



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### **Biosimilars are highly similar versions of biologic drugs.**

A biologic drug is created out of a living cell, so it's complicated to make. A biosimilar is a copy of a biologic. Creating this copy is a complex process, which is why it's highly similar to the original biologic, but not exactly the same.

### **Creating a biologic is like making bread.**

You can follow the directions exactly, but each batch will be different because bread is made with a living ingredient—yeast! Just like making bread from yeast, every loaf will be safe to eat and delicious, but it will not be identical to the original loaf of bread. In the same way, if you try to copy a biologic, the resulting biosimilar version will be highly similar with no clinically meaningful differences in how safe and effective it is, but it won't be identical.

### **Are they safe?**

Yes! The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires biosimilars to meet rigorous standards so you can trust their safety and quality.

### **What does this mean to you? Cost savings.**

Biologics are some of the most expensive medications in the U.S., with some costing tens of thousands of dollars every year.

An increasing number of manufacturers are starting to create biosimilar versions of biologic drugs so we will start seeing more of them on the market. This competition will mean cost savings to you.

### **If your provider prescribes a biosimilar, don't be afraid to use it.**

The packaging may look different than the brand name, but it's a safe and effective alternative.

Watch a short video where we address key questions about biosimilar medications and what they can do for you.

Visit [premera.com/video/biosimilars](https://premera.com/video/biosimilars) or scan the QR code to watch the video.

