

# Biosimilars & You: A Guide for Patients with Rheumatic Disease

## 5 FAST FACTS

In honor of this year's **Rheumatic Disease Awareness Month**, here are five fast facts patients should know about biosimilars.

## What are Biosimilars?

Biosimilars are a type of medication that is a nearly exact copy made to work like an already existing biologic, called a reference product.

### 1 Biosimilars Are Safe & Effective

Biosimilars have been used to treat rheumatic diseases in the U.S. since 2016 and are a growing part of treatment as more options become available.

Biosimilars go through a strict review process with the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. They are only approved if they're proven to be just as safe and effective as the approved reference product the biosimilar is based upon.

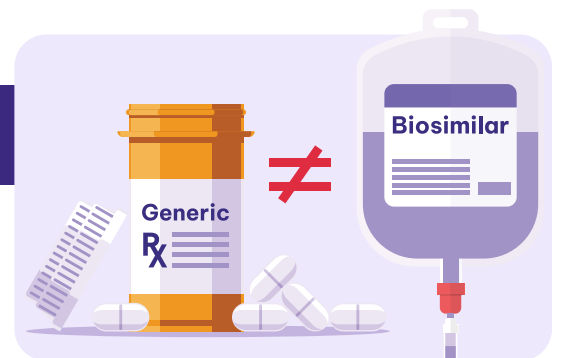


### 2 Biosimilars Are Made Using Living Cells

Biosimilars are made through a complex and detailed process using living cells. They are usually 500 - 1,000 times larger than a typical drug molecule, meaning they are not identical to the reference product but function the same.

### 3 Biosimilars Are Different from Generic Drugs

Biosimilars are not the same as generic drugs because generic drugs are an identical copy of the reference product, sometimes known as a "brand name" product. While biosimilars are not completely identical to their reference product, they are just as safe and effective and serve the same function.



### 4 Biosimilars & Biologics are Near Exact Copies

Imagine giving two people the same blueprints of a skyscraper and asking them to build it based on those alone. The finished buildings will be the same structurally; however, some of the finishes, paint colors, and other minor differences will be present. These differences will not affect the function of the building, the same way the slight differences in biosimilars do not affect the drug's function.

### 5 Biosimilars May Be an Effective Addition to Your Treatment Plan

The decision to use a biosimilar should be made between the rheumatology healthcare provider and the patient or caregiver. It is important to know this decision may also be influenced by a patient's insurance.

