



Biosimilars: Frequently asked questions

What is a biosimilar?

A biosimilar is a biologically engineered medication that is highly similar to and has no clinically meaningful differences from an existing U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved innovator.

What is an innovator?

An innovator is the brand biologic medication that was first-to-market for a unique compound. Examples: Neulasta[®], Remicade[®]

Is a biosimilar like a generic?

A generic and a biosimilar are both alternative versions of an innovator medication, but a biosimilar is not considered a generic. Generics are created from synthesized chemicals while biosimilars are biological products created from a living system, such as a microorganism, plant cell or animal cell and is often more difficult to characterize than small molecule medications.¹

Biosimilars and generics are approved by the FDA through different pathways. The active ingredients of generics are the same as those of brand name medications and the manufacturer of generic product must demonstrate that it has the same clinical effectiveness and absorption levels. In contrast, manufacturers must demonstrate that a biosimilar is highly similar to the innovator, except for minor difference in clinically inactive components. In addition, biosimilar manufacturers must demonstrate that there are no clinically meaningful differences between biosimilar and innovator in terms of safety and effectiveness.¹

How many biosimilars are FDA approved?

More than 50 biosimilars have been approved by the FDA, but some are still not commercially available.²

Biosimilars in the marketplace:

- Biosimilar for Epogen®/Procrit® = Retacrit®
- Biosimilar for Actemra® = Tyenne®, Tofidence™
- Biosimilar for Neulasta® = Fulphila™, Fylnetra®, Nyvepria™, Stimufend®, Udenyca™, Ziextenzo™
- Biosimilar for Neupogen® = Nivestym™, Releuko®, Zarxio®
- Biosimilar for Remicade®* = Avsola™, Inflectra®, Renflexis™
- Biosimilar for Avastin® = Alymsys®, Mvasi™, Vegzelma®, Zirabev™, Zymfentra™
- Biosimilar for Herceptin® = Herzuma®, Kanjinti®, Ogivri™, Ontruzant®, Trazimera™
- Biosimilar for Rituxan® = Riabni™, Ruxience™, Truxima®
- Biosimilar for Lantus® = Rezvoglar™, Semglee®
- Biosimilar for Lucentis® = Byooviz®, Cimerli™
- Biosimilar for Humira® = Abrilada™, Amjevita™, Cyltezo®, Hadlima™, Hyrimoz®, Hulio®, Idacio®, Simlandi®, Yuflyma®, Yusimry™

*Includes infliximab (unbranded product)

Several other biosimilars have received FDA approval but are not yet available in the U.S. market. The list of approved and commercially available biosimilars changes constantly. View updates at [FDA Biosimilar Product Information](#).

What biosimilar management strategies are in place?

Biosimilars create a more competitive pricing environment among drug manufacturers that can help drive down medication costs. UnitedHealthcare evaluates each brand name biologic and its biosimilar one-by-one and makes strategic decisions based on various factors, including lower net cost.

UnitedHealthcare commercial plans

Medication	Category	Innovator brand(s)	Administration method	Preferred product*
Filgrastim	Cancer support	Granix Neupogen	Physician administered or self-injected	Zarxio Preferred product for both the pharmacy and medical benefits
Pegfilgrastim	Cancer support	Neulasta	Physician administered or self-injected	Neulasta Udenyca Preferred products for both the pharmacy and medical benefits
Infliximab	Inflammatory conditions	Remicade**	Physician administered	Avsola Inflectra Preferred products for the medical benefit
Epoetin alfa	Anemia	Epogen Procrit	Physician administered or self-injected	Retacrit Preferred product for both the pharmacy and medical benefits
Bevacizumab	Cancer	Avastin	Physician administered	Mvasi Preferred product for the medical benefit
Trastuzumab	Cancer	Herceptin	Physician administered	Kanjinti Ogivri Trazimera Preferred products for the medical benefit
Rituximab	Cancer	Rituxan	Physician administered	Ruxience Truxima Preferred products for the medical benefit
Insulin glargine	Diabetes	Lantus	Self-injected	Lantus Preferred product for the pharmacy benefit
Ranibizumab	Retinal disorders	Lucentis	Physician administered	Preferred product strategy under review
Adalimumab	Inflammatory conditions	Humira	Self-injected	Humira Amjevita Cyltezo Hadlima adalimumab-adaz (unbranded Hyrimoz, low WAC product) Covered products for the pharmacy benefit
Tocilizumab	Inflammatory conditions	Actemra	Physician administered or self-injected	Actemra Preferred product for both the pharmacy and medical benefit

*UnitedHealthcare uses utilization management strategies (e.g. prior authorization or exclusions) to prefer products.

**Includes infliximab (unbranded product)

¹Byooviz has strategic exclusion, since there are therapeutically equivalent alternatives available at lower cost

UnitedHealthcare community plans

Medication	Category	Innovator brand(s)	Administration method	Preferred product*
Filgrastim	Cancer support	Granix Neupogen	Physician administered or self-injected	Zarxio Preferred product for both the pharmacy and medical benefits
Pegfilgrastim	Cancer support	Neulasta	Physician administered or self-injected	Neulasta Udenyca Preferred products for both the pharmacy and medical benefits
Infliximab	Inflammatory conditions	Remicade**	Physician administered	Avsola Inflectra Preferred products for the medical benefit
Epoetin alfa	Anemia	Epogen Procrit	Physician administered or self-injected	Epogen Procrit Retacrit Preferred products for both the pharmacy and medical benefits
Bevacizumab	Cancer	Avastin	Physician administered	Mvasi Preferred product for the medical benefit
Trastuzumab	Cancer	Herceptin	Physician administered	Kanjinti Preferred product for the medical benefit
Rituximab	Cancer	Rituxan	Physician administered	Ruxience Truxima Preferred products for the medical benefit
Insulin glargine	Diabetes	Basaglar Lantus	Self-injected	Lantus Rezvoglar Preferred products for the pharmacy benefit
Ranibizumab	Retinal disorders	Lucentis	Physician administered	No preferred biosimilar products in this category
Adalimumab	Inflammatory conditions	Humira	Self-injected	Amjevita Hadlima adalimumab-adbm (unbranded Cyltezo) adalimumab-fkjp (unbranded Hulio) Preferred products for the pharmacy benefit
Tocilizumab	Inflammatory conditions	Actemra	Physician administered or self-injected	Strategy under review

*UnitedHealthcare Community Plan uses utilization management strategies (e.g. prior authorization) to prefer products. Different preferred products may exist in some markets due to state Medicaid requirements.

**Includes infliximab (unbranded product)

UnitedHealthcare Medicare plans

Medication	Category	Innovator brand(s)	Administration method	Preferred product*
Filgrastim	Cancer support	Granix Neupogen	Physician administered or self-injected	Part B: Zarxio Preferred product Part D: Zarxio Preferred product
Pegfilgrastim	Cancer support	Neulasta	Physician administered or self-injected	Part B: Neulasta Udenyca Preferred products Part D: Neulasta Udenyca Preferred products
Infliximab	Inflammatory conditions	Remicade**	Physician administered	Part B: Avsola Inflectra Renflexis Preferred products Part D: Avsola Inflectra Preferred products
Epoetin alfa	Anemia	Procrit	Physician administered or self-injected	Part B: Epogen Procrit Retacrit Preferred products Part D: Retacrit Preferred products
Bevacizumab	Cancer	Avastin	Physician administered	Part B: Mvasi Zirabev Preferred products Part D: Mvasi Zirabev Preferred products

UnitedHealthcare Medicare plans

Medication	Category	Innovator brand(s)	Administration method	Preferred product*
Trastuzumab	Cancer	Herceptin	Physician administered	Part B: Kanjinti Ogivri Trazimera Preferred products Part D: Kanjinti Trazimera Preferred products
Rituximab	Cancer	Rituxan	Physician administered	Part B: Ruxience Truxima Preferred products Part D: Ruxience Truxima Preferred products
Insulin glargine	Diabetes	Lantus	Self-injected	Part D: Lantus Preferred product
Ranibizumab	Retinal disorders	Lucentis	Physician administered	No preferred biosimilar products in this category
Adalimumab	Inflammatory conditions	Humira	Self-injected	Part D: Humira Cyltezo Yuflyma Preferred products
Tocilizumab	Inflammatory conditions	Actemra	Physician administered or self-injected	Strategy under review

*UnitedHealthcare uses utilization management strategies (e.g. prior authorization or step therapy) to prefer products. Part D information is applicable to MAPD plans only.

**Includes infliximab (unbranded product)

UnitedHealthcare individual and family plans

Medication	Category	Innovator brand(s)	Administration method	Preferred product*
Filgrastim	Cancer support	Granix Neupogen	Physician administered or self-injected	Zarxio Preferred product for both the pharmacy and medical benefits
Pegfilgrastim	Cancer support	Neulasta	Physician administered or self-injected	Neulasta Udenyca Preferred products for the medical benefit
Infliximab	Inflammatory conditions	Remicade**	Physician administered	Avsola Inflectra Preferred products for the medical benefit
Epoetin alfa	Anemia	Epogen Procrit	Physician administered or self-injected	Retacrit Preferred product for both the pharmacy and medical benefits
Bevacizumab	Cancer	Avastin	Physician administered	Mvasi Preferred product for the medical benefit
Trastuzumab	Cancer	Herceptin	Physician administered	Kanjinti Trazimera Preferred products for the medical benefit
Rituximab	Cancer	Rituxan	Physician administered	Ruxience Truxima Preferred products for the medical benefit
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Adalimumab	Inflammatory conditions	Humira	Self-injected	Humira adalimumab-adaz (unbranded Hyrimoz) adalimumab-adbm (unbranded Cyltezo) Amjevita Hadlima Preferred products for the pharmacy benefit
Tocilizumab	Inflammatory conditions	Actemra	Physician administered or self-injected	Strategy under review

*UnitedHealthcare uses utilization management strategies (e.g. prior authorization or step therapy) to prefer products.

**Includes infliximab (unbranded product)

Learn more

Contact your UnitedHealthcare representative for additional information

¹ U.S. Food and Drug Administration: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/therapeutic-biologics-applications-bla/biosimilars>. Accessed 7/1/24

² U.S. Food and Drug Administration: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/biosimilars/biosimilar-product-information>. Accessed 7/1/24

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