FAST*facts*

MARCH 2025

WHAT PATIENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BIOLOGICS

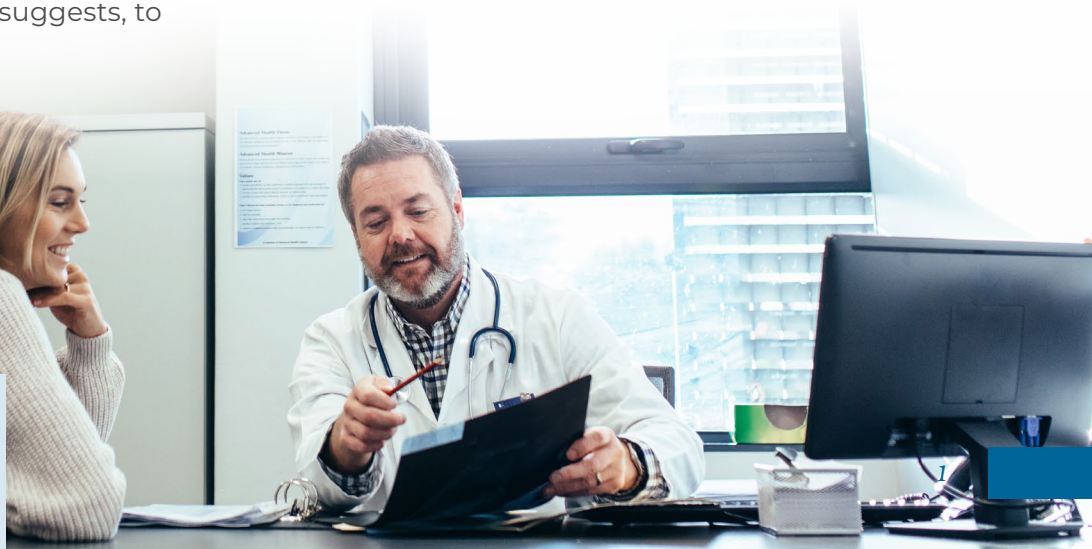
Medical innovation is revolutionizing the treatment of complex conditions, bringing new hope and possibilities to patients. At the forefront of this progress are biologics — innovative treatments that address a wide range of conditions. Understanding how biologics work can help patients make informed decisions about their treatment options and overall health.

Q: How are biologics different from other treatments?

Biologics are innovative medical treatments made from natural and living sources, such as plant or animal cells. They can target specific cells and proteins in the body, making them personalized to each patient.[1] Unlike small molecule drugs, which are chemically synthesized, biologics are more complex. Like all drugs, biologics are regulated and approved by the FDA to ensure their safety and effectiveness.[2] These approaches often offer the most effective means of treatment for many illnesses that currently have no other options.

Biosimilars are biologic medications that are very similar, as the name suggests, to their biologic origin. There is no clinically meaningful difference between a biosimilar and its biologic innovator.

Biologics and biosimilars are often delivered differently from traditional medications. Unlike pills taken by mouth, these are given as an injection or infusion. Some are injections, administered by a health care provider at a clinician's office. Other biologics are infused, either at a clinician's office or a dedicated infusion center. In some cases, patients receive their biologics at home with instructions for proper storage and self-administration.



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Q: Which conditions do biologics treat?

Biologics are often used to treat chronic conditions that traditional drugs are not successful in addressing. Biologics work by reducing symptoms, slowing disease progression and generally improving a patient's quality of life. In the case of arthritis, biologics can slow or stop inflammation that damages joints. They've also been shown to block specific inflammatory pathways, reducing airway swelling and constriction to alleviate asthma symptoms.

Some more examples of biologics include insulin for diabetes, blood products for transfusion, immunotherapy for cancer, gene therapy for genetic diseases, and tissues for transplantation, such as skin or bone grafts.[3]

Q: Do biologics require a specialty pharmacy?

Some biologics may be distributed through specialty pharmacies due to their unique storage and handling requirements. A specialty pharmacy offers medications that help treat rare and complex medical conditions. They provide special handling, storage and administration of these medications.[4]

Health plan barriers like prior authorizations may occasionally prevent coverage for these medications, so it's important for patients to speak with their healthcare provider if any issues are encountered. Clinicians can help navigate these barriers and ensure access to necessary treatments.

Biologics Can Treat Multiple Diseases, Including

Asthma and COPD

Cancer

Eczema and Psoriasis

Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Q: Why are biologics important?

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of illness in the United States and account for $4.5 trillion in annual health care costs.[5] Utilizing biologics and biosimilars to treat chronic conditions properly can reduce overall expenses for the health care system, restoring productivity and improving patient outcomes across all disease states.

Insurance coverage should offer access to all treatment options so that health care providers and patients can work together to explore the best biologic for a patient's specific needs.

> These treatments provide **new hope** for those seeking better ways to manage their health.

Q: How do patients know if a biologic is right for them?

Biologics or biosimilars may be the right choice for some patients, offering innovative solutions for managing complex health conditions. These treatments provide new hope for those seeking better ways to manage their health. Patients should take an active role in their health care by seeking out resources, asking questions and gathering information to make informed decisions. By discussing options with a health care provider, patients can determine the most suitable treatment for their individual needs. It's important for patients to advocate on their own behalf — ensuring they have access to all available options and are fully involved in choosing the best path for their health and well-being.

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