

# Health Awareness

## Understanding Biosimilars

(NAPSA)—Perhaps your doctor has talked to you about biosimilar medicines or you have heard or read about them in the news—but what are biosimilars? There is a great deal of complexity and confusion about what they are, how they are made and why they should matter to patients. A new educational website, *Biosimilars Clarified*, provides support to patients, caregivers and the health care community by offering straightforward information about biosimilar medicines.

### Knowing the Basics

Many of today's important medications are biologic medicines, which are used to treat serious medical conditions. Biologics are made from living organisms such as human or animal cells, and microorganisms like bacteria or yeast. Biosimilars are a type of biological product that are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) because they are highly similar to an already FDA-approved biological product, known as the originator biologic or reference product, and have been shown to have no clinically meaningful differences in terms of the safety, purity and potency of the product.

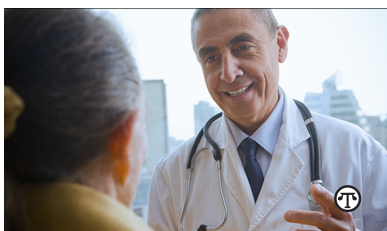
### Biosimilars Are Not Generics

Generic drugs are chemical copies of certain prescription medicines that are made by using the same formula.

The living cells used to make biologics can cause tiny differences between batches of the medicine each time it's made. Biosimilars go through many tests to check that they act in a similar way in the body.

### How Are Biosimilars Similar to Originators?

- Structure—the shape of the molecule is similar
- Function—what the medicine does is similar
- Clinical Effect—how the medicine



**There's a new educational website that provides straightforward information about biosimilar medicines.**

- treats a particular disease is similar
  - Effective and Well Tolerated—works in the same way in the body
- More Access and Potentially Lower Costs**

As health care costs continue to rise, biosimilars may offer well-tolerated and effective treatment options that have the potential to increase patient access to biologic medicines. They may also help reduce health care spending.

### Education and Support for Patients

Support is often an important part of treatment for patients taking biosimilars. Patients are encouraged to log on to *Biosimilars Clarified* ([www.merckclarifiesbiosimilars.com](http://www.merckclarifiesbiosimilars.com)). The website is designed to provide clear, concise and straightforward information about biosimilar medicines in a simple, easy-to-use, question-and-answer format. *Biosimilars Clarified* offers a host of informative features on such topics as:

- What are biologic medicines?
- Biosimilars—are they safe and effective?
- The value of biosimilars and increasing access to treatment.
- The availability of support programs for patients taking biosimilars.

Merck is working to provide health care professionals, payers and consumers with clarity on biosimilars.