

# WHAT PATIENTS WITH DIABETES SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BIOSIMILARS



A biosimilar is a medication that is biologically similar to another medication (known as a reference product). The reference product and biosimilar have no clinical differences, so providers can expect the same safety and efficacy.

## About Insulin

- » Insulin is a biologic, which means it is made from living sources including animal cells and microorganisms (like bacteria or yeast).
- » Biologic medications are more difficult to produce than drugs made from chemicals because they come from living sources and have natural differences.



### *Has insulin always been a biologic?*

Insulin has always been created in living cells, but was historically regulated as a chemical drug. Insulin is now regulated as a biologic because years of research have proved it meets this criteria. The ingredient, manufacturing process, and how a patient obtains insulin at the pharmacy has not changed.

The categorical change of insulin from chemical to biologic allows prescription drug companies to make biosimilar versions of the brand name insulin (similar to how generic medications are versions of the brand name medications).

### *How will the availability of biosimilar insulins affect patients with diabetes?*

The most noticeable change is that patients can be prescribed a variety of additional insulin options once they are available. Some of these may be available to the patient at a lower cost, depending on insurance coverage. A pharmacist may give a patient an interchangeable biosimilar insulin, similar to how they would substitute a generic for a brand-name drug. Patients can learn more about the price of a specific biosimilar by contacting their pharmacy or insurance company.

### Questions About Your Medications?

Contact our care coordination team, part of your healthcare team.

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Arizona Care Network

