Cancer Vanguard

Patient Information Leaflet – Suggestions for Use

Description

This leaflet is a 2 sided piece.

Side 1

The first side is a general description about biosimilars. It aims to reassure and explain to patients, who are to be changed from a reference biologic to one of its biosimilars, the following:

- What a reference biologic means
- What a biosimilar is
- Some reassurance about how biosimilars are developed and licensed

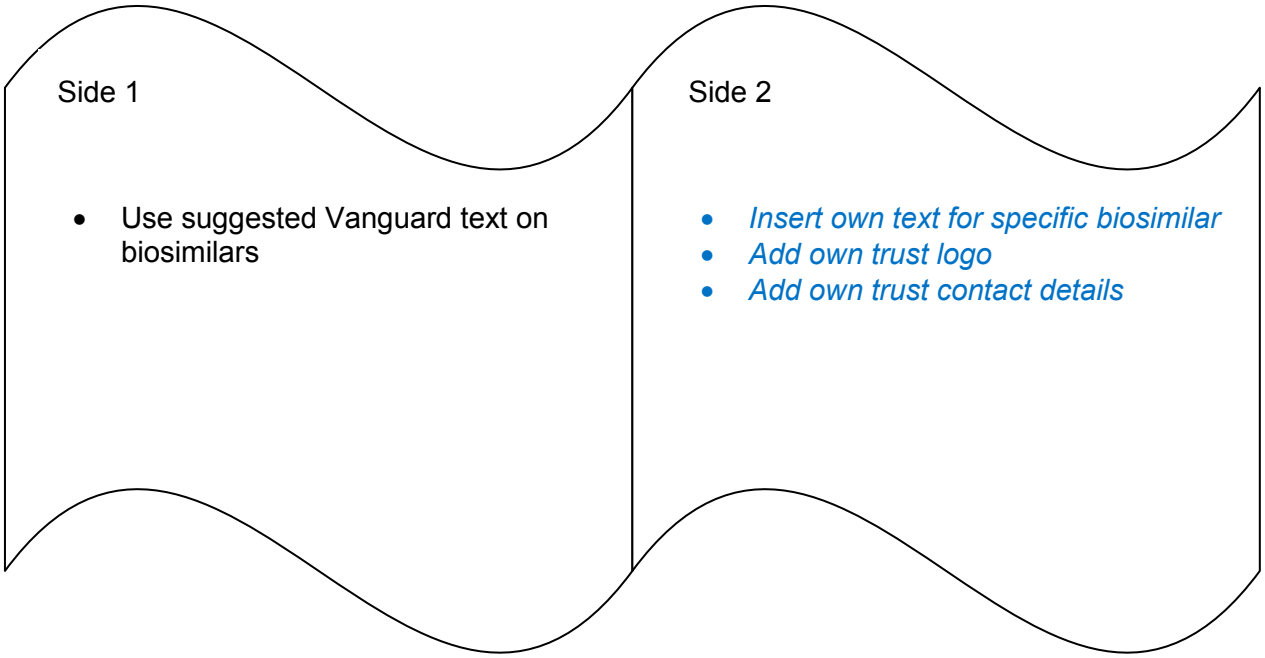
This description has been written by pharmacists from the Cancer Vanguard sites and approved by the wider Cancer Vanguard Biosimilar Adoption steering group. It has also been reviewed by the Royal Marsden Hospital patient information standards team.

Side 2

The second side is intended for trusts to adapt for their own use to help uptake of any specific biosimilar through patient education.

Trusts may add their own logos and contact details having passed the document through their own PALS or information standards, where needed.

How to Use



The Cancer Vanguard is a partnership between
Greater Manchester Cancer Vanguard Innovation, RM Partners and UCLH Cancer Collaborative

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Back to timeline

General Biosimilar Information Leaflet
For Patients Changed from Biologic to Biosimilar

One of the medicines your doctor has previously prescribed you is called a biologic medicine. Instead of this biologic, your hospital now uses a biosimilar. This leaflet will help you understand more about biologic and biosimilar medicines, but if you have any questions please ask your pharmacist, nurse or doctor.

What is a biologic?

Biologic medicines are made by living cells in a controlled way, rather than being built as synthetic chemicals like regular medicines, such as tablets. Think of them in the same way that bread or yoghurt is made using living cells. The original biologics were first used to treat people with serious illnesses in the UK over 20 years ago and they have improved life for millions of people worldwide.

What is a biosimilar?

You may have heard of some medicines you take described as generics, for example supermarket own brand ibuprofen is the generic version of Nurofen®. Generics are exact copies of the original medicine and are relatively simple to copy and manufacture. The same idea applies to biosimilars, but it is not possible to make an exact copy of an original biologic medicine due to their size and the complex way they are made. Biosimilars are highly similar to the original medicine but not identical. They have been thoroughly tested to show no difference in terms of how the medicine works, its effectiveness and safety.

How can I be confident that it will work the same?

The companies that make biosimilars have to show the licensing authority very strict evidence of their effectiveness, safety and quality. Clinical studies have to be conducted in a large group of people to show that the medicine works just as well and is just as safe as the original biologic.

Biosimilars take several years and cost many millions of pounds to develop and prove that they work in the same way to the original medicine. This is another way biosimilars are different to generics. Generics do not need studies in people with disease and take much less time and money to develop.

What are the benefits?

You can expect to have the same results from your biosimilar as if you'd had the original medicine. Sometimes it is provided in a new device such as an injection pen or with a bigger range of strengths to make it easier for you to use.

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Back to timeline

Side 2

There is a benefit to the NHS too. Biosimilars are usually provided at a much lower price than the original biologic. This helps the NHS provide complex medicines at better prices and improve treatment for people with conditions like yours.

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Back to timeline