



Crohn's and
Colitis Canada
Crohn et
Colite Canada

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are biologic drugs?

Biologic drugs, also called biologics, are made using human or animal tissue or micro-organisms as a starting material. Biologics are generally administered under the skin by injection or intravenously by infusion. There are [different types of biologics](#) used to treat Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

What are biosimilars?

A biosimilar is a copy of a biologic drug. In Canada, biosimilars were previously known as subsequent entry biologics (SEBs). It is not an exact copy, but it is highly similar. Before a biosimilar can be sold in Canada, its manufacturer must prove to Health Canada that it is highly similar to the original drug, including its effectiveness and safety profile. [More details.](#)

Do they work?

Yes. Health Canada reviews and approves all drugs before they can be sold in Canada. Health Canada also has rules about how all drugs are manufactured. All companies selling drugs in Canada must follow the same rules for the manufacturing process and for ensuring the quality of their ingredients. Biosimilars do offer safe and effective treatment for people with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis (the two main forms of inflammatory bowel disease).

Why would the government or insurance plan want to switch me from a treatment (biologic) that works?

Biosimilars are usually less costly than the original biologic. This means that a payer (government or private insurer) would be making this decision to save money.

What does Crohn's and Colitis Canada think?

While we agree that biosimilars offer safe and effective treatment for people with Crohn's and colitis, we think that the decision to switch a patient from a biologic drug to its biosimilar should be based on patient/doctor choice. We believe that switching from a biologic drug to its biosimilar for non-medical reasons is not in the best interest of patients.

How did Crohn's and Colitis Canada decide upon their position on this topic?

We reviewed all available scientific evidence on switching patients for non-medical reasons, surveyed gastroenterologists, inflammatory bowel disease nurses and patients and their caregivers across Canada, considered legal and ethics implications and consulted widely with experts in the treatment of people with Crohn's and colitis.



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Where can I find the Crohn's and Colitis Canada Position Statement on Biosimilars?

We have posted our updated [Position Statement](#) to our website.

What is Crohn's and Colitis Canada doing to support me?

We have gathered patient and caregiver feedback on this topic which contributed greatly to our [comprehensive report](#) on perspectives of biosimilars and switching policy. You will see your feedback reflected in this report and also in our [Position Statement](#) on this topic. Crohn's and Colitis Canada will be discussing our findings and position with provincial and territorial governments and will be sharing all information publicly. We hope to influence any future policy that may affect you and will continue to advocate for your health and well-being.

Where can I get information on this topic?

We have posted information on this topic to [our website](#). Crohn's and Colitis Canada is here to respond to any questions you may have. You may reach us via email or call us at help@crohnsandcolitis.ca or 1-800-387-1479.