

Patient Information on the biosimilar “denosumab” medication and considerations if you want to switch

First of all, you may wonder what a biosimilar medication is. According to Health Canada, a biosimilar is a *“biologic drug that is highly similar to a biologic drug that was already authorized for sale. There are no expected clinically meaningful differences in efficacy and safety between a biosimilar and the biologic drug that was already authorized for sale”*.

The biologic drug referenced here is denosumab that some biosimilars are developed for it and is now available in British Columbia. The biosimilars are typically sold at a lower price, so the healthcare system saves money.

If you want to consider switching and/or going on the biosimilar medication there is criteria that should be considered (see the below categories) and a prescription is required:

- **Patients funded with PharmaCare:** *In August 2024 BC PharmaCare promptly announced a schema for expedient conversion of PharmaCare funded denosumab patients to the bio similar preparations.*
- **Patients with extended health benefit coverage**
- **Patients paying out-of-pocket**

This link, on the BC Coalition of Osteoporosis Physicians (BCCOP) has helpful information that outlines the criteria. https://www.bccop.org/files/ugd/f8e8b1_4032e37c78bb4c0da3be03bb18e4247e.pdf

If you have any questions if the biosimilar medications apply to your situation, we suggest you contact your health care provider and/or your pharmacist.

If you want to have a better understanding of the biologic, biosimilar and generic drugs, Osteoporosis Canada has webinars on this subject. To view, below is the information:

FOR PATIENTS		
WEBINAR NAME	PRESENTER	LINK
Biosimilar for Patients on Denosumab	Dr. Teri Charrois	https://osteoporosis.ca/oc-replay/biosimilar-for-patients-on-denosumab/

FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS		
WEBINAR NAME	PRESENTER	LINK
Biologics & Biosimilars – An Overview for Healthcare Providers	Dr. Allan Low	https://osteoporosis.ca/oc-replay/biologics-biosimilars-an-overview-for-healthcare-providers/
Information for Healthcare Providers on the Health Canada Recently Approved Biosimilar for Denosumab	Dr. Angela Cheung	https://osteoporosis.ca/oc-replay/information-for-healthcare-providers-on-the-health-canada-recently-approved-biosimilar-for-denosumab/