



**Re: Best-Value Biological Medicines; Adalimumab & Etanercept**

23 January 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The purpose of this letter is to notify you that a recommendation of the HSE-Medicines Management Programme (MMP) in relation to biological medicines containing adalimumab and etanercept has been accepted by the HSE Executive Management Team. It is HSE policy that adult patients who are being initiated on adalimumab or etanercept (i.e. new patients to such therapy) should be prescribed a best-value biological (BVB) medicine.

I have previously written to you (21 May 2019) in relation to the BVB medicines that the MMP recommend for adalimumab and etanercept. These include:

- Adalimumab: **Imraldi**<sup>®</sup>. Where the clinician wishes to prescribe a citrate-free formulation of adalimumab, the MMP recommends **Amgevita**<sup>®</sup>
- Etanercept: **Benepali**<sup>®</sup>

Since the publication of our recommendations, we have seen an increase in the prescribing of the BVB medicines for adalimumab and etanercept. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have embraced our recommendations. Prescribing of the BVB medicines is leading to significant savings for the health service, which can assist in facilitating access to new, innovative medicines for patients.

At this point in time, in order to ensure that the potential savings arising from this initiative are fully realised, additional measures are being put in place for adult patients who are initiated on adalimumab or etanercept in line with HSE policy.

**Accordingly, from 1 February 2020, reimbursement of adalimumab and etanercept under the High Tech Arrangement will only be supported for the BVB medicines (i.e. Imraldi<sup>®</sup> or Amgevita<sup>®</sup> for adalimumab, and Benepali<sup>®</sup> for etanercept) in adult patients commencing such therapy.**

When issuing a repeat prescription for a biological medicine containing adalimumab or etanercept, the patient should be considered for switching to the BVB medicine.

Please find enclosed frequently asked questions for healthcare professionals, and information for patients. Further information on the BVB medicine initiative including information for healthcare professionals, and resources to support initiating patients on, or switching them to the BVB medicines are available on the MMP website ([www.hse.ie/yourmedicines](http://www.hse.ie/yourmedicines)) in the section entitled *Best-value biological medicines*.

MMP pharmacists are available to engage with consultants and clinical teams to provide support for initiation of, and switching to the BVB medicines. Please contact the MMP ([mmp@hse.ie](mailto:mmp@hse.ie)) if you wish to avail of this support.

My thanks for your ongoing support in promoting safe, effective and cost-effective prescribing.

With best wishes,



---

Professor Michael Barry,  
**National Clinical Lead,**  
**Medicines Management Programme.**  
[www.hse.ie/yourmedicines](http://www.hse.ie/yourmedicines)