



## Information about Biological Medicines containing Adalimumab & Etanercept January 2020

A biological medicine contains an active substance, made from a biological source, such as living cells. Biological medicines containing adalimumab or etanercept treat a variety of inflammatory conditions including:

- rheumatoid arthritis
- inflammatory bowel disease; and
- psoriasis.

### What is a biosimilar medicine?

A biosimilar medicine is a newer version of the original biological medicine. A biosimilar medicine is very similar to the original biological medicine. It works in the same way.

### Are biosimilar medicines safe?

Biosimilar medicines are tested to show they are just as safe and effective as the original biological medicine.

### What are the Best-Value Biological Medicines for adalimumab and etanercept?

The Best-Value Biological (BVB) Medicines identified by the HSE for adalimumab and etanercept are:

- Adalimumab: **Amgevita®** or **Imraldi®**
- Etanercept: **Benepali®**

The HSE will continue to identify BVB medicines for adalimumab and etanercept in 2020.

### What's changing?

From **February 2020**, we are changing the way biological medicines containing adalimumab and etanercept are prescribed under the HSE's High Tech Arrangement.

### I am a new patient, what do the changes mean for me?

- From **1 February 2020**, if you are starting treatment on adalimumab or etanercept, you will be prescribed one of the BVB medicines.

### **What's the definition of a new patient?**

A new patient, is an adult, who has not been prescribed or received adalimumab or etanercept within the last six months.

### **I am an existing patient prescribed adalimumab or etanercept, what does the change mean for me?**

- If you are an existing patient, you will continue to receive your medicine from your community pharmacy. The changes outlined above do not apply to you.

If you are currently on a non-BVB medicine, your consultant or a member of their team may discuss with you the possibility of switching to a BVB medicine.

### **Does my consultant know about these changes?**

Yes. Consultants in dermatology, gastroenterology and rheumatology are aware of these changes.

### **Why have the changes been introduced?**

BVB medicines tend to cost less than the original biological medicines. Switching patients to BVB medicines will save the HSE money. This means we can give new innovative medicines to even more patients.

### **What supports are available?**

Supports for patients prescribed these medicines include:

- home nurse visit to provide training on administering the injection
- supply of sharps bins and waste collection service
- access to patient support telephone line
- provision of product information

Your consultant or a member of their team will register you for these services.

## Where can I get more information on biosimilar medicines?

Further information for patients on biosimilar medicines is available on the following websites:

**HSE Medicines Management Programme:** <https://www.hse.ie/yourmedicines> under Best-value biological medicines

**Health Products Regulatory Authority:** <http://www.hpra.ie/homepage/medicines/special-topics/biosimilar-medicines>

**European Medicines Agency:** <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/human-regulatory/overview/biosimilar-medicines-overview#information-for-patients-and-healthcare-professionals-section>