



Factsheet for Consumers and Carers Infliximab Biosimilars on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

Renflexis[®] is a new brand of infliximab listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on 1 August 2017. Like the Inflectra[®] brand, which was PBS listed on 1 December 2015, Renflexis[®] is a biosimilar to the infliximab reference biological medicine Remicade[®].

All three brands contain infliximab.

Medicines on the PBS are subsidised by the Australian Government.

What is infliximab?

Infliximab is a biological medicine that is used to treat a range of serious and chronic diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, plaque psoriasis, ulcerative colitis, and Crohn's disease. Your doctor can discuss with you the detailed requirements around prescribing PBS subsidised infliximab.

Infliximab is prescribed by specialists. It is administered in specialist infusion clinics and given through an infusion into a vein.

More information about this medicine is available by entering 'infliximab' at <https://www.nps.org.au/medical-info/medicine-finder>

What are biological and biosimilar medicines?

Biological medicines, including biosimilars, contain substances made by living cells or organisms. They are more complex to make than chemical based medicines.

A biosimilar medicine is a highly similar version of a reference biological medicine, which is the first brand to market. Biosimilar medicines are used to treat the same diseases, in the same way, as the reference biological medicines.

Biosimilar medicines have been tested and shown to be as safe and effective as the reference biological medicines.

Infliximab and PBS brand substitution

The independent expert Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) recommended that Inflectra[®] and Renflexis[®] be listed on the PBS as substitutable biosimilars of the Remicade[®] reference brand of infliximab. All three brands are substitutable with each other.

When PBS brands are listed as substitutable the pharmacist can dispense any brand, with permission from the patient, unless directed otherwise by the prescriber.

Who chooses the brand?

In Australia, infliximab infusions are administered in specialist infusion clinics within hospitals. The choice of brand generally used in a hospital clinic may be based on medicine purchasing decisions made by a clinician-led committee. Specific patient requirements will remain for discussion between a patient and their doctor.



Will I have the same health outcome no matter which brand of infliximab I use?

Yes. The Therapeutic Goods Administration approved Inflectra[®] and Renflexis[®] as biosimilars of Remicade[®] because they were determined to be as safe and effective as Remicade[®] and they provide the same health outcomes.

Why are biosimilar medicines important?

The introduction of biosimilar medicines encourages brand competition in the Australian market. This will lead to a reduction in the cost of biological medicines, allowing the government to provide subsidised access to more new treatments for seriously ill patients.

The high cost of biological medicines means less capacity to pay for new medicines. Six of the ten most expensive medicines subsidised by the PBS in 2015-16 were biological medicines with a combined cost of \$1.28 billion. Without taxpayer subsidy, these medicines can cost a patient between \$400 - \$1700 per treatment. However when listed on the PBS, the maximum a patient pays per script in 2017 is \$38.80, with the government paying the difference. Concessional patients pay \$6.30, or nil if they have reached their PBS safety net.

Where can I find more information?

Australian Government Department of Health: www.health.gov.au/biosimilars

Therapeutic Goods Administration: www.tga.gov.au/publication/evaluation-biosimilars

The PBAC Public Summary Document for Renflexis[®]: <http://www.pbs.gov.au/info/industry/listing/elements/pbac-meetings/psd/2016-11/infliximab-biosimilar-psd-november-2016>

The PBAC Public Summary Document for Inflectra[®]: <http://www.pbs.gov.au/industry/listing/elements/pbac-meetings/psd/2015-07/files/infliximab-psd-july-2015.pdf>

