



Australian Government

Department of Health

Information for Consumers and Carers Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme - New Biosimilar TRASTUZUMAB

Trazimera[®] is a brand of trastuzumab that was listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on 1 May 2020.

This brand joins the following brands currently on the PBS:

Brand name	Date listed on PBS	Brand status
Herceptin [®]	1 October 2006	Reference
Ogivri [®]	1 August 2019	Biosimilar
Herzuma [®]	1 November 2019	Biosimilar
Kanjinti [®]	1 December 2019	Biosimilar
Ontruzant [®]	1 January 2020	Biosimilar

All brands contain the active ingredient trastuzumab and have been assessed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration to be highly similar. The biosimilar brands provide the same health outcome and are as safe and effective as Herceptin[®].

Medicines on the PBS are subsidised by the Australian Government.

Other changes to the PBS listings for trastuzumab

On 1 October 2019 changes were made to the PBS listings for trastuzumab so that all brands and uses of trastuzumab approved under the PBS are prescribed by your doctor using a simpler approval process, known as a 'streamlined' approval.

What is trastuzumab?

Trastuzumab is a biological medicine that is used to treat breast and stomach cancer. Your doctor can discuss with you the detailed requirements around prescribing PBS subsidised trastuzumab.

Trastuzumab is prescribed by specialists. It is administered in a hospital or clinic and given through an infusion into a vein.

More information about this medicine is available by entering 'trastuzumab' at the [NPS MedicineWise 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 synthetic chemical medicines.

A biosimilar medicine is a highly similar version of a reference biological medicine, which is invariably 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.

Trastuzumab and PBS brand substitution

The independent expert Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) recommended that the biosimilar brands be listed on the PBS as substitutable with Herceptin[®], the reference brand of trastuzumab.

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

Who chooses the brand?

In Australia, infusions of trastuzumab are given in a hospital or clinic. The choice of brand generally used in a hospital or clinic may be based on medicine purchasing decisions made by a doctor-led committee. Specific patient requirements will be discussed between a patient and their doctor.

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

Yes. The TGA approved the biosimilars of Herceptin[®] because they were determined to be as safe and effective as Herceptin[®] and to provide the same health outcomes.

Why are biosimilar medicines important?

The growing cost of new and innovative medicines, including biological medicines, continues to put pressure on the financial sustainability of the PBS. Eight of the ten most expensive medicines subsidised by the PBS in 2018-19 were biological medicines with a combined cost of \$1.87 billion. The cost to Government for trastuzumab alone in 2018-19 was \$163.8 million. The introduction of biosimilar medicines encourages brand competition in the Australian market. This will lead to a reduction in the cost of biological medicines, improving the Government's capacity to subsidise access to new and innovative treatments for seriously ill patients.

Where can I find more information?

The biosimilars page on the [Australian Government Department of Health website](#)

The biosimilars regulation page on the [Therapeutic Goods Administration website](#)

The PBAC Public Summary Document for Ogivri[®] on the [PBS website](#)

The PBAC Public Summary Document for Herzuma[®] on the [PBS website](#)

The PBAC Public Summary Document for Kanjinti[®] on the [PBS website](#)

The PBAC Public Summary Document for Ontruzant[®] on the [PBS website](#)

The PBAC Public Summary Document for Trazimera[®] on the [PBS website](#)

The [Biosimilar Education Hub](#) (for consumers and carers)