



# Factsheet for Consumers and Carers

## Biosimilar Trastuzumab on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

Ogivri® is a new brand of trastuzumab listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on 1 August 2019. It is a biosimilar to the reference biological medicine Herceptin®. Both brands contain the active ingredient trastuzumab and have been assessed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to be highly similar. Ogivri® provides the same health outcome and is as safe and effective as Herceptin®.

Medicines on the PBS are subsidised by the Australian Government.

### 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 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.

### Trastuzumab and PBS brand substitution

The independent expert Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) recommended that Ogivri be listed on the PBS as a substitutable biosimilar®.

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, trastuzumab infusions are administered in a hospital or clinic. 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 trastuzumab I use?

Yes. The Therapeutic Goods Administration approved Ogivri® as a biosimilar of Herceptin® because it was determined to be as safe and effective as Herceptin® and provides 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. Seven of the ten most expensive medicines subsidised by the PBS in 2017-18 were biological medicines with a combined cost of \$1.53 billion. The cost to Government for trastuzumab alone in 2017-18 was \$169.40 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, ensuring the government can continue 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](#)