



Pharmacy Update

National Edition

September 2024

Enhancements to GreenShield’s Biosimilar New Start Program

As an early adopter of biosimilars and an ongoing leader in this space, GreenShield recognizes the crucial role biosimilars play in generating savings and enhancing the sustainability of the healthcare system. In 2016, we were the first to establish a “New Start” program that includes biosimilars as preferred products under all formularies for all patients starting biologic therapy. Ensuring their optimal use early on has helped biosimilars gain momentum and has contributed to the sustainable biosimilar market we see today and for the foreseeable future.

Currently, under GreenShield’s Biosimilar New Start Program*, for all patients *newly* starting biologic therapy, GreenShield covers only biosimilars (if one exists) and allows originator products only in exceptional circumstances (the prescriber must submit a clinical rationale for why the plan member is not able to use a biosimilar product).

Starting **October 15, 2024**, patients who are newly starting treatment with one of the listed “low-cost” biologic drugs have the option to use either the original product or one of the biosimilar alternatives specified in the table. For those who choose the originator product, GreenShield will reimburse up to the cost of the biosimilar, and the plan member will be responsible for the difference. This change is part of our commitment to developing innovative programs and strategies that ensure the best value for treatment, optimize plan sponsor resources, and enhance access to medications for all plan members.

Drug	Originator Biologic Brand Name	Biosimilar(s) Available	Indication(s)
insulin aspart	NovoRapid®	Kirsty® Trurapi®	Diabetes
insulin glargine	Lantus®	Basaglar® Semglee®	
insulin lispro	Humalog®	Admelog®	
filgrastim	Neupogen®	Grastofil® Nivestym™ Nypozi®	Neutropenia
enoxaparin	Lovenox® Lovenox® HP	Inclunox® Inclunox® HP Noromby® Noromby® HP Redesca® Redesca® HP Elonox® Elonox® HP	Thromboembolic disorders

**This program does not apply to plans without prior authorization and/or who have a custom prior authorization program.*

In provinces where there is a mandatory switch policy, to ensure continued coordination, the following exclusions apply:

- Plan members in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec
- Plan members aged 65 or older in Alberta and Ontario

This approach allows for additional plan member choice while protecting drug plans through transparent savings (should the member wish to use the originator) and ensures we can continue to coordinate with provincial plans that have implemented a mandatory switching policy.

This change does not impact plan members already treated with these originator products. Any existing claimants already claiming one of the originator products will be permitted to remain on the originator, and the claim will continue to be paid as per the plan design.

How do I know if a claim was reduced to biosimilar pricing?

GreenShield will return the following response code if a claim was reduced to biosimilar pricing: “LG=lowest cost equivalent pricing”.

To access the most up-to-date GreenShield drug authorization forms, please visit [providerConnect™](#) and navigate to the **Pharmacy Provider** section under “What you Need.”

Continued Evolution of GreenShield’s Biosimilar Strategy: Preferred Products for Ustekinumab Biosimilars

In the February 2024 Pharmacy Update, we shared details on the launch of the preferred products for adalimumab biosimilars which went live earlier this year in January.

Stelara (ustekinumab) is one of the world’s top-selling drugs, treating a range of inflammatory conditions. Currently, three approved ustekinumab biosimilars available in the Canadian market have all demonstrated similar safety and efficacy profiles to the originator, Stelara.

As a next phase and part of our commitment to delivering maximum value to plan sponsors, we are introducing a tiered listing of ustekinumab biosimilar products on our formularies. The following ustekinumab products will be split into two categories: **preferred** and **non-preferred** products, as outlined in the table below. This means, anyone **newly** starting ustekinumab therapy must use a Category 1 (preferred product) below.

Category 1 (preferred products)	Finlius and Wezlana
Category 2 (non-preferred products)*	Jamteki

The preferred products chosen were based on approved indications, formulation, and product format. All preferred products demonstrated excellence in these areas and maintained the opportunity for plan member choice.

** Products listed as Category 2 agents will be non-preferred products and will only be available to patients in exceptional circumstances (e.g., documented intolerance or adverse events to 2 preferred products).*

The preferential listing applies to all Health Canada approved indications including: **

- Plaque psoriasis (including pediatrics 6-17)
- Psoriatic arthritis
- Crohn's disease
- Ulcerative colitis

GreenShield will return with the following messages outlined in the table below if a claim for a category 2 non-preferred product or Stelara is submitted without prior approval, along with the "alternate product is a benefit" message.

Product(s)	Pharmacy messaging
Jamteki	This is a non-preferred biosimilar. Reprocess with alternative biosimilar. See providerConnect for more info.
Stelara (originator)	Preferred biosimilar(s) may be eligible. Reprocess with biosimilar. See providerConnect for more info.

Similar to how prior authorization listing decisions are handled, information about future changes, including the addition of new drug molecules to this preferential listing, can be found in the most recent GreenShield drug authorization forms. These details are available on [providerConnect™](#) under the Pharmacy Provider section titled "What you Need."

RBC Branded Drug Authorization Forms Coming Soon to providerConnect

Starting August 28th, you will notice a new RBC tab in the Pharmacy Providers section. This section will include a link to fully branded RBC drug authorization forms. Please utilize these forms when possible for RBC members. As a reminder, GreenShield is the claims adjudicator for RBC Insurance drug claims.

** *Preferential listing does not apply in Quebec.*