Ustekinumab biosimilar: Patient Information Sheet

**What is ustekinumab?**

Ustekinumab is a medicine used to treat inflammatory conditions: plaque psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis, Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis. It belongs to a group of medicines called monoclonal antibodies and is given as an injection under the skin (subcutaneously). Some patients will receive their first dose through a drip in the vein of your arm (intravenous infusion).

**How does ustekinumab work?**

Ustekinumab is a monoclonal antibody (protein) that alters your immune system. It works by blocking the chemical messengers IL-12 and IL-23. These chemical messengers help fight infection, but they can also cause inflammation. Ustekinumab reduces inflammation and associated signs and symptoms of your disease.

**How is ustekinumab made**?

Ustekinumab is a biological medicine. Biological medicines are medicines made or derived from living cells. Biological medicines were first used to treat people with serious illnesses in the UK over 20 years ago and they have improved the lives of millions of people worldwide.

**What versions of ustekinumab are available in the UK?**

Until recently, only one pharmaceutical company made ustekinumab. Now other companies make biosimilar ustekinumab.

**What is biosimilar ustekinumab**?

Biosimilar ustekinumab is a highly similar copy of the original ustekinumab medicine. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines a biosimilar as a medicine that is similar in terms of quality, safety and effectiveness to the original licensed product.

# Are biosimilars safe?

The body in the UK who regulates medicines is the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). All medicines have to pass rigorous tests for quality, biological activity, safety and effectiveness. Biosimilar medicines pass the same tests as the original medicine.

**What does treatment with biosimilar ustekinumab mean for you?**

Whether you are due to start treatment with ustekinumab for the first time or have agreed with your clinician that your treatment will change from Stelara® to biosimilar ustekinumab [Wenzela®, Pyzchiva®, or Uzpruvo®]*,* you can expect the same results.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) produces guidance for healthcare. If NICE recommends the original biological medicine in their guidance, the same recommendation applies to the biosimilar medicines.

All versions of ustekinumab can cause similar side effects. If you experience any problems with your treatment, report it promptly to your treating clinician, nurse or pharmacist.

# What are the benefits of biosimilars?

Many original biological medicines are expensive and the number of conditions they treat is increasing. Biosimilar medicines are highly similar to the original medicines and have the same quality, safety and effectiveness as well as being less expensive.

Therefore, the savings made by using biosimilars allow the NHS to treat more patients.

**Further advice**

If you have further questions about ustekinumab or biosimilars, then please speak to a member of your specialist or pharmacy team.