

Pharmacy

Genotropin® to Omnitrope® switch

You are currently receiving Genotropin®. This is a brand name for the drug somatropin (growth hormone).

The Endocrinology team is looking at switching to a different brand of somatropin called Omnitrope®. There should be no difference in the effectiveness of the drug but it does significantly reduce the cost to the NHS of this treatment.

This leaflet will help you understand more about what it means but if you have any questions, please ask your pharmacist, nurse or doctor.

What is the difference between Genotropin® and Omnitrope®?

Both Genotropin® and Omnitrope® are brand names for a drug called somatropin which is used to replace growth hormone. Somatropin is a biologic medicine and Omnitrope® is what is known as a biosimilar medicine.

What is a biologic?

Biologic medicines are made by living cells in a controlled way, rather than being built as synthetic chemicals like regular medicines, such as tablets. Think of them in the same way that bread or yogurt is made using living cells. The original biologics were first used to treat people with serious illnesses in the UK over 20 years ago, and they have improved life for millions of people worldwide.

What is a biosimilar?

You may have heard of some medicines you take described as 'generics'. For example supermarkets' own brand ibuprofen is the generic version of Nurofen®. Generics are exact copies of the original brand medicine and are relatively simple to copy and manufacture. The same idea applies to biosimilars, but it is not possible to make an exact copy of an original biologic medicine due to their size and the complex way they are made. Biosimilars are highly similar to the original medicine, but not identical. They have been thoroughly tested to show there is no difference in how the medicine works, its effectiveness or safety.

How can I be confident it will work the same?

The companies that make biosimilars have to show the licensing authority very strict evidence of their effectiveness, safety and quality. Clinical studies have to be conducted in a large group of people to show that the medicine works just as well, and is just as safe as the original biologic. Biosimilars take several years and cost many millions of pounds to develop and prove that they work in the same way as the original medicine. This is another way biosimilars are different to generics. Generics do not need studies in people with disease and take much less time and money to develop.



How will the biosimilar medicine be administered?

The biosimilar medicine will be administered in exactly the same way as the original biologic medicine.

Will I experience different side effects?

Results from clinical trials comparing the biosimilar with the original biologic medicine have shown there to be no difference in the side effects. The European licensing authority has over ten years experience of assessing biosimilar medicines and monitoring their safety profile. Over that time, the authority has not identified any relevant difference in the nature, severity or frequency of adverse effects between biosimilars and their reference biologic medicines.

What should I do if I have any problems?

You are monitored in exactly the same way regardless of which brand of somatropin you have. All the brands of somatropin can cause similar side effects. If you experience any problems with treatment, report these promptly to your medical team or call The Christie Hotline on **0161 446 3658**.

What are the benefits?

You can expect to have the same results from your biosimilar as if you had had the original medicine. There is a benefit to the NHS too. Biosimilars are usually provided at a much lower price than the original biologic. This helps the NHS provide complex medicines at better prices and improve treatment for people with conditions like yours.

Can I choose to receive Genotropin®?

Yes. We understand that some of our patients may struggle with a different device or have other reasons for not wanting to change their treatment. If you do not want to switch, please discuss this at your next clinic appointment and a joint decision will be made which respects your choice.

Who can I approach for further advice?

If you have further queries about biosimilars, then please do not hesitate to speak to a member of your nursing team: your doctor or pharmacist.

Acknowledgements:

The Cancer Vanguard 'General Biosimilar information leaflet for Patients Changed from Biologic to Biosimilar'.

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **patient.information@christie.nhs.uk**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week