

Plain English Summary

Sodium-glucose co-transporter 2 inhibitors for treating heart failure and chronic kidney disease

What does the guidance say?

Empagliflozin is recommended for inclusion on the Standard Drug List (SDL) for government subsidy for treating patients with heart failure with reduced ejection fraction or chronic kidney disease.

The subsidy for dapagliflozin for these conditions is available until 1 August 2024.

What is heart failure?

Heart failure, also called congestive heart failure, is a long-term condition when the heart cannot efficiently pump blood around the body because the heart muscle has been damaged or is too weak to work properly. As a result, the muscles and organs in the body do not get enough oxygen and nutrients. Symptoms of heart failure can include shortness of breath, tiredness, lack of strength, swollen legs and an abnormal heart rate (too fast, too slow, or irregular). Patients often require long-term treatment and lifestyle changes to manage symptoms and prevent the condition from worsening.

Doctors measure the percentage of blood that the left ventricle of the heart pumps out with each contraction. This is known as ejection fraction. When the ejection fraction is 40% or less, the amount of blood being pumped out of the heart is less than the body needs. This is known as reduced ejection fraction (also called systolic heart failure).

What is chronic kidney disease?

Chronic kidney disease occurs when the kidneys become damaged and are unable to filter wastes and water from the body. This causes wastes to build up to high levels in the blood and can lead to complications such as high blood pressure, anaemia (low level of red blood cells), heart failure, weak bones and nerve damage. Chronic kidney disease is caused by medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure or kidney inflammation.

What is empagliflozin?

Empagliflozin belongs to a group of medicines called sodium-glucose co-transporter 2 (SGLT2) inhibitors which help to lower glucose (sugar) levels in the blood. It is taken orally in combination with other medicines when used to treat heart failure and chronic kidney disease.

If your doctor considers empagliflozin is a suitable treatment for you, they will tell you how much you need to take and how long you need to take it for.

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Why was empagliflozin recommended for subsidy?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Empagliflozin was recommended for subsidy because its benefits in treating certain patients with heart failure or chronic kidney disease justifies its cost.

Dapagliflozin, another SGLT2 inhibitor which is already subsidised, has been recommended for delisting from the MOH List of Subsidised Drugs because of unfavourable cost effectiveness compared to empagliflozin.

What does listing on SDL mean for me?

Drugs on SDL are subsidised at 50% for all Singaporean citizens who are treated in a public healthcare institution. Patients from lower to middle income households may receive up to 75% subsidy.

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 Agency for Care Effectiveness - ACE

 Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE)

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