

Plain English Summary

Brentuximab for T-cell lymphoma

What does the guidance say?

Brentuximab is recommended for listing on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) for government funding for patients with different types of T-cell lymphoma who meet certain criteria.

What is lymphoma?

White blood cells (lymphocytes) are part of the immune system and travel around the body to help fight infections. There are two types of lymphocyte, T lymphocytes (T cells) and B lymphocytes (B cells). Lymphoma is a type of blood cancer that occurs when lymphocytes grow uncontrollably. There are different forms of lymphoma depending on the type of lymphocyte affected.

Doctors test cancer cells to see the type of lymphocyte affected, how quickly they are likely to grow and spread, and whether they have proteins on their surface that might help some treatments work better than others.

Some lymphomas have too much of a protein called CD30 on the surface of their cells which helps them divide and grow. This is known as CD30-positive cancer.

What is T-cell lymphoma?

T-cell lymphoma is rare and come in different forms. The most common type is peripheral T-cell lymphoma (PTCL), which is fast-growing and accounts for most T-cell lymphoma cases in Singapore. Up to half of people with PTCL have CD30-positive disease.

Other less common forms of T-cell lymphoma include anaplastic large cell lymphoma which is a CD30-positive subtype of PTCL, and cutaneous T-cell lymphoma which is very rare and begins in the skin.

Symptoms of T-cell lymphoma vary depending on the type of lymphoma and where it has developed in the body. The most common symptoms include swollen lymph nodes in the neck, groin or armpit, fever and unexplained weight loss.

What is brentuximab?

Brentuximab is also known by its full name brentuximab vedotin. It belongs to a group of medicines called monoclonal antibodies which target the CD30 protein found on the surface of cancer cells and stop the cancer from growing. Brentuximab is given as a slow drip into a vein (intravenously) either on its own or in combination with other cancer medicines depending on the type of cancer being treated.

Your doctor will tell you how much you need to take and how long you need to take it for.

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Who can have brentuximab?

Brentuximab is used to treat patients with:

- CD30-positive peripheral T-cell lymphoma if they have not had previous treatment before,
- Systemic anaplastic large cell lymphoma that has come back (relapsed) or not improved (refractory) after previous treatment, and
- CD30-positive cutaneous T-cell lymphoma that has continued to worsen after at least one previous treatment.

Your doctor will tell you if brentuximab is a suitable treatment for you and which other treatments you need to take with it.

Why was brentuximab recommended for funding?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Brentuximab was recommended for funding because its benefit in improving survival for certain patients with different types of T-cell lymphoma justifies its cost.

What does listing on MAF mean for me?

The MAF helps people pay for expensive treatments that are clinically necessary. If your doctor prescribes brentuximab for T-cell lymphoma, and you meet the MAF criteria, your treatment cost will be subsidised by 40% to 75%.

Brentuximab has also been included on the Cancer Drug List (CDL) and is claimable under MediShield Life. The subsidy class and MediShield Life claim limits are available at go.gov.sg/moh-cancer-drug-list.

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 Agency for Care Effectiveness - ACE  Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE)

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