

## Plain English Summary

# Cancer drugs for previously treated multiple myeloma

### What does the guidance say?

Carfilzomib, ixazomib and pomalidomide are recommended for listing on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) for government funding for patients with previously treated multiple myeloma who meet certain criteria.

Daratumumab has not been recommended for subsidy for this condition.

Funding will be available for carfilzomib from 4 January 2022, and from 1 September 2022 for ixazomib and pomalidomide.

### What is multiple myeloma?

Multiple myeloma is a type of blood cancer that causes plasma cells to grow uncontrollably and produce abnormal “myeloma cells” in bone marrow. As the number of myeloma cells increases in bone marrow, there is less room for healthy blood cells, causing bone pain and making patients more susceptible to infections.

Patients who have symptoms will usually receive a combination for different medicines. Treatment aims to reduce the number of myeloma cells to as few as possible (this is called remission).

### What are carfilzomib, ixazomib and pomalidomide?

Carfilzomib and ixazomib belong to a group of medicines called proteasome inhibitors which help proteins to build up and kill myeloma cells. Carfilzomib is given as a drip into a vein (intravenously) and ixazomib is taken orally.

Pomalidomide belongs to a group of medicines called immuno-modulatory agents that help the bone marrow make normal blood cells and encourage the immune system to destroy myeloma cells. It is taken orally.

All three treatments are used in combination with other medicines to treat multiple myeloma that has worsened despite previous treatment (refractory) or has come back (relapsed). Your doctor will tell you which treatment is most suitable for you, how much you need to take and how long you need to take it for.

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## Who can have carfilzomib, ixazomib or pomalidomide?

All three treatments are used for patients with multiple myeloma who have had previous treatment but the cancer has continued to worsen (relapsed or refractory disease).

Carfilzomib is used in combination with dexamethasone (dual therapy) or in combination with dexamethasone plus either lenalidomide, thalidomide or cyclophosphamide (triple therapy) for patients with multiple myeloma who have had at least one previous treatment.

Ixazomib is used in combination with lenalidomide and dexamethasone (triple therapy) for patients with multiple myeloma who have had at least one previous treatment.

Pomalidomide is used in combination with dexamethasone plus either bortezomib or cyclophosphamide (triple therapy) for patients who have had at least one previous treatment. It can also be used in combination with dexamethasone (dual therapy) for patients who have had at least two previous treatments (including both lenalidomide and bortezomib) but the cancer continues to worsen.

## Why were these treatments recommended for funding?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Carfilzomib, ixazomib and pomalidomide were recommended because their benefit in improving survival for certain patients with previously treated multiple myeloma justifies their costs.

Daratumumab was not recommended for subsidy because its benefit does not justify its cost. You can speak to a medical social worker to find out if there is other financial assistance available to help with the cost of treatment if you need daratumumab.

The MAF helps people pay for expensive treatments that are clinically necessary. If your doctor prescribes carfilzomib, ixazomib or pomalidomide for previously treated multiple myeloma, and you meet the MAF criteria, your treatment cost will be subsidised by 40% to 75%.

All three drugs have also been included on the Cancer Drug List (CDL) and are claimable under MediShield Life. The subsidy class and MediShield Life claim limits are available at [go.gov.sg/moh-cancer-drug-list](http://go.gov.sg/moh-cancer-drug-list).

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The Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE) was established by the Ministry of Health (Singapore) to drive better decision-making in healthcare through health technology assessment (HTA), clinical guidance and education. It publishes guidances on diagnosing, treating, and preventing different medical conditions based on the latest research information available worldwide.

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*To find out more about ACE visit [www.ace-hta.gov.sg](http://www.ace-hta.gov.sg)*