

Plain English Summary

Dabrafenib in combination with trametinib for treating BRAF V600 mutation-positive anaplastic thyroid cancer

What does the guidance say?

Dabrafenib used in combination with trametinib is recommended for listing on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) for government funding for patients with locally advanced or metastatic BRAF V600 mutation-positive anaplastic thyroid cancer.

What is anaplastic thyroid cancer?

Thyroid cancer occurs when abnormal cells grow uncontrollably, forming a mass (tumour) in the thyroid gland. There are different types of thyroid cancer, which are classified based on how the cancer cells look under a microscope. Anaplastic thyroid cancer is very rare and occurs in less than 2% of people with thyroid cancer. It usually grows faster than other types of thyroid cancer and is more common in women and people over the age of 60 years. Apart from feeling a lump in the neck, the most common symptoms are difficulty breathing or swallowing, a hoarse voice, coughing and a feeling of pressure in the neck.

When the cancer spreads from the thyroid gland to lymph nodes in the neck or to other parts of the body, this is known as advanced or metastatic disease.

What is BRAF V600 mutation-positive cancer?

The BRAF V600 gene makes a protein that helps cells grow. Some patients have a mutation in the BRAF gene in the V600 position which causes cancer cells to grow quickly and spread. This is known as BRAF V600 mutation-positive cancer.

Doctors test patients to see if they have a BRAF V600 mutation so they can determine the appropriate type of treatment. Up to 50% of people with anaplastic thyroid cancer have a BRAF V600 mutation.

What are dabrafenib and trametinib?

Dabrafenib and trametinib are targeted treatments that work together to slow the growth and spread of cancer cells that have a BRAF V600 mutation. Dabrafenib targets the BRAF gene and trametinib targets the MEK 1 and MEK 2 proteins within the cancer cell.

Dabrafenib and trametinib are taken orally together each day. Your doctor will tell you how much you need to take of each medicine and how long you need to take them for.

Plain English Summary

Dabrafenib in combination with trametinib for treating BRAF V600 mutation-positive anaplastic thyroid cancer

Who can have dabrafenib in combination with trametinib?

Adults with anaplastic thyroid cancer can have dabrafenib in combination with trametinib if:

- they have a BRAF V600 mutation confirmed by a diagnostic test, and
- the cancer has spread outside of the thyroid gland or to other organs, and
- image-guided treatments, such as radiation therapy, have not worked well.

Your doctor can advise if dabrafenib and trametinib are suitable treatments for you.

Why were dabrafenib and trametinib recommended for funding?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Dabrafenib used in combination with trametinib was recommended because their benefit in slowing cancer growth and improving survival for certain patients with advanced BRAF V600 mutation-positive anaplastic thyroid cancer justifies their costs.

What does listing on MAF mean for me?

The MAF helps people pay for expensive treatments that are clinically necessary. If your doctor prescribes dabrafenib in combination with trametinib for you, and you meet the MAF criteria, your treatment cost will be subsidised by 40% to 75%.

Dabrafenib in combination with trametinib 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.

Published: 4 January 2022

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.

This summary is not, and should not be regarded as, a substitute for professional or medical advice. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare professional about any medical condition.

To find out more about ACE visit www.ace-hta.gov.sg