

## **Ezetimibe for treating primary hypercholesterolaemia**

### WHAT DOES THE GUIDANCE SAY?

Ezetimibe is recommended for listing on the Standard Drug List (SDL) for government subsidy for adults with primary (heterozygous-familial or non-familial) hypercholesterolaemia as monotherapy or add-on therapy to statins.

### WHAT IS PRIMARY HYPERCHOLESTEROLAEMIA?

Hypercholesterolaemia describes a condition when a person's cholesterol levels are too high. In primary heterozygous familial hypercholesterolaemia, high cholesterol levels are caused by a faulty gene. Whereas in primary non-familial hypercholesterolaemia, which is more common, genetic and lifestyle factors (such as poor diet, smoking and lack of exercise) combined cause high cholesterol levels.

### WHAT IS EZETIMIBE?

Ezetimibe is a drug that prevents the absorption of cholesterol in the intestines, which helps to lower cholesterol levels in the blood. It may be taken alone, or with other cholesterol-lowering medicines known as statins.

### HOW MUCH EZETIMIBE CAN I TAKE?

Your doctor will usually prescribe one 10 mg tablet once a day.

### HOW LONG SHOULD I TAKE IT?

Your doctor will advise you on how long you will need to take ezetimibe.

## Ezetimibe for treating primary hypercholesterolaemia

### WHO CAN HAVE EZETIMIBE?

People can apply for ezetimibe monotherapy if they have primary (heterozygous-familial or non-familial) hypercholesterolaemia and cannot start statin therapy because:

- It is not suitable for them; or
- They cannot tolerate it.

People can apply for ezetimibe as add-on therapy to a statin if they have primary (heterozygous-familial or non-familial) hypercholesterolaemia and their serum total or low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol concentration is not well controlled despite taking the maximum tolerated statin dose

### WHY WAS EZETIMIBE RECOMMENDED FOR SUBSIDY?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Ezetimibe was recommended because its benefit in relieving symptoms and improving quality of life for certain patients with primary hypercholesterolaemia justifies its cost.

### WHAT DOES LISTING ON THE SDL MEAN FOR ME?

Drugs on the Standard Drug List (SDL) represent therapies essential for managing common diseases affecting the majority of patients in Singapore.

They 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 a higher subsidy of up to 75%.

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ACE is the national health technology assessment agency under the Ministry of Health, Singapore. It publishes guidances on diagnosing, treating, and preventing different medical conditions based on the latest research information available worldwide.

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