

Plain English Summary

Gemtuzumab ozogamicin for treating de novo CD33-positive acute myeloid leukaemia

What does the guidance say?

Gemtuzumab ozogamicin in combination with chemotherapy has been recommended for inclusion on the Cancer Drug List (CDL) for patients with de novo CD33-positive acute myeloid leukaemia who have not had any treatment before. Government funding will be provided for this treatment through the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) and MediShield Life.

What is acute myeloid leukaemia?

Acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) is a fast-growing cancer that affects the blood and bone marrow. It causes immature blood cells to grow uncontrollably and form “leukaemia cells” which do not function properly. As the number of leukaemia cells increases in the blood and bone marrow, there is less room for healthy blood cells, making patients more susceptible to anaemia (lack of red blood cells), infections (lack of white blood cells) and bleeding (lack of platelets).

De novo AML refers to AML diagnosed in patients who do not have a history of blood or bone marrow diseases and have not had any treatments that may cause leukaemia.

Doctors test cancer cells to see if they have certain proteins (receptors) that might help some treatments work better than others. Most patients with AML have too much of a protein called CD33 on the surface of their cells. This is known as CD33-positive AML. Doctors also test for certain genetic changes to assess the chance of recovery or recurrence with treatment. This is known as cytogenetic risk. Patients can be categorised into favourable, intermediate or unfavourable risk groups. They can also have an unknown risk if the tests are inconclusive.

What is gemtuzumab ozogamicin?

Gemtuzumab ozogamicin belongs to a group of medicines called antibody-drug conjugates. It specifically targets the CD33 protein found on cancer cells and stops the cancer from growing. Doctors will usually prescribe it for patients who have not had drug treatments before for AML. It is given with chemotherapy as a slow drip into a vein (intravenously).

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

Why was gemtuzumab ozogamicin recommended for funding?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Gemtuzumab ozogamicin was recommended because its benefits in improving survival for patients with de novo CD33-positive AML justify its costs.

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Who can have gemtuzumab ozogamicin?

Gemtuzumab ozogamicin is used with chemotherapy (daunorubicin and cytarabine) for patients with de novo CD33-positive AML if they:

- do not have acute promyelocytic leukaemia;
- have not had treatment for AML before; and
- have a favourable, intermediate or unknown cytogenetic risk profile.

Treatment with gemtuzumab ozogamicin can start before cytogenetic test results are available. Your doctor can advise if gemtuzumab ozogamicin is a suitable treatment for you.

What does including on the CDL mean for me?

Drugs on the Cancer Drug List (CDL) can be subsidised under the Standard Drug List (SDL) or Medication Assistance Fund (MAF), and are claimable under MediShield Life. The subsidy class and MediShield Life claim limits are available at [go.gov.sg/moh-cancer-drug-list](https://www.go.gov.sg/moh-cancer-drug-list).

Gemtuzumab ozogamicin is claimable under MediShield Life and has been listed on the MAF. The MAF helps people pay for expensive treatments that are clinically necessary. If your doctor prescribes gemtuzumab ozogamicin for you, and you meet the MAF criteria, your treatment cost will be subsidised by 40% to 75%.

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 Agency for Care Effectiveness - ACE

 Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE)

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