

## Plain English Summary

# High-strength insulin glargine for treating diabetes mellitus

### What does the guidance say?

High-strength insulin glargine 300 units/ml is not recommended for listing on the Standard Drug List (SDL) for government subsidy for treating type 1 or 2 diabetes mellitus.

### Why was it not recommended for subsidy?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. High-strength insulin glargine (300 units/ml) was not recommended for subsidy because its benefit does not justify its cost compared to lower strength insulin glargine (100 units/ml).

Insulin glargine 100 units/ml is already listed on the Standard Drug List (SDL). Drugs on SDL 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 up to 75%.

### What is diabetes mellitus?

Insulin is a hormone that helps glucose (a type of sugar) enter cells in the body to be used as energy or stored for later use. People with diabetes mellitus have high glucose in their blood because their bodies do not make enough insulin or their cells have stopped responding to insulin. Over time, high blood glucose levels can cause a range of problems including vision loss, kidney disease, foot and leg problems and an increased risk of stroke and heart disease.

There are two types of diabetes mellitus:

- Patients with type 1 diabetes mellitus cannot produce enough insulin to meet their bodies' needs.
- Patients with type 2 diabetes do not respond to normal levels of insulin and over time they stop making enough insulin to meet their bodies' needs.

Treatment for diabetes often requires lifestyle changes and medicines to manage blood glucose levels.

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## What is insulin glargine?

There are several types of insulin available that differ in how quickly they work (e.g., short-acting and long-acting) and for how long they last in the body. Insulin types also vary in the number of injections needed each day, the size of each dose and the timing of the injection. The aim of treatment is to keep insulin levels as steady as possible over a 24-hour period to keep blood glucose levels within the optimal range. Insulin glargine is a long-acting insulin that takes longer to work but the effects last longer. High-strength insulin glargine helps to reduce the number of injections a patient needs each day when they require a large insulin dose to control their blood glucose levels.

## Is this the right treatment for me?

There are different types of treatments for type 1 and 2 diabetes mellitus. Your doctor may recommend you take high-strength insulin glargine if other drugs cannot adequately control your condition. Your doctor should give you clear information, listen to your views and concerns, and talk to you about your treatment options.

Some of the questions you may want to ask your doctor when making decisions about your care are:

- How will the treatment affect my day-to-day activities?
- How well does it work compared to other treatments?
- What are the side effects and risks of treatment, and how likely are they?
- How long will I need to be on the treatment for?
- What happens if the treatment stops working?
- What happens if I do not want to have treatment?

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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.

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.

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