

## Plain English Summary

# Lenvatinib and sorafenib for treating differentiated thyroid cancer

### What does the guidance say?

Sorafenib is recommended for listing on the Standard Drug List (SDL), and lenvatinib is recommended for listing on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) for government funding for patients with locally advanced or metastatic differentiated thyroid cancer that has continued to worsen despite radioactive iodine treatment.

Funding will be available for sorafenib from 4 January 2022, and from 1 September 2022 for lenvatinib.

### What is differentiated 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. Differentiated thyroid cancer (DTC, which includes papillary and follicular thyroid cancers) accounts for about 90% of all thyroid cancers. Common symptoms include a lump in the neck, difficulty breathing or swallowing, a hoarse voice, coughing and a feeling of pressure in the neck.

Most patients have surgery followed by radioactive iodine therapy to treat DTC. However, some patients will need other treatments if their cancer continues to grow.

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 locally advanced or metastatic disease.

### What are sorafenib and lenvatinib?

Sorafenib and lenvatinib belong to a group of medicines called tyrosine kinase inhibitors that help to slow or stop the growth of cancer cells. Doctors will usually prescribe sorafenib or lenvatinib for DTC if it continues to worsen despite treatment with radioactive iodine.

Both treatments are taken orally each day. 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 sorafenib and lenvatinib?

Adults with differentiated thyroid cancer can have sorafenib or lenvatinib if:

- the cancer has spread outside of the thyroid gland or to other organs, and
- radioactive iodine therapy has not worked well and the cancer continues to worsen.

Your doctor can advise if sorafenib or lenvatinib are suitable treatments for you.

## Why were sorafenib and lenvatinib recommended for funding?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Sorafenib and lenvatinib were recommended because their benefit in slowing cancer growth and improving survival for certain patients with differentiated thyroid cancer justifies their costs.

## What does listing on SDL and MAF mean for me?

Sorafenib has been 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 up to 75% subsidy.

Lenvatinib has been listed on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF). The MAF helps people pay for expensive treatments that are clinically necessary. If your doctor prescribes lenvatinib for you, and you meet the MAF criteria, your treatment cost will be subsidised by 40% to 75%.

Sorafenib and lenvatinib 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](https://www.go.gov.sg/moh-cancer-drug-list).

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