

## Plain English Summary

# Aflibercept and faricimab for treating diabetic macular oedema and age-related macular degeneration

## What does the guidance say?

Faricimab is recommended for listing on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) for government subsidy for adults with diabetic macular oedema or wet age-related macular degeneration.

Aflibercept is not recommended for subsidy for these conditions.

## What is diabetic macular oedema?

Diabetic macular oedema is an eye condition that affects people with diabetes. Uncontrolled high blood sugar levels can damage blood vessels in the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye known as the retina. This allows fluid and blood to leak into the central part of the retina (the macula), causing it to swell (oedema). One or both eyes can be affected. Symptoms include blurry or distorted vision, dull colours, and floaters.

## What is age-related macular degeneration?

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) happens when the macula breaks down or degenerates with age. It typically affects people aged 50 years or older. There are two types of AMD – dry (non-neovascular) or wet (neovascular). Dry AMD occurs when the macula thins over time. It is more common and progresses slower than wet AMD.

Wet AMD occurs when blood vessels behind the retina start to grow abnormally under the macula, causing blood and fluid leakage and rapid central vision loss. Symptoms include blurry or distorted vision, a dark spot in the central vision, and trouble seeing in low light.

## What is faricimab?

Faricimab belongs to a group of medicines called vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) inhibitors. It prevents the growth of abnormal blood vessels and fluid leakage in the eye, and reduces swelling of the macula. This helps to improve or stabilise vision. It is given as an injection directly into the eye (intravitreal injection).

Your doctor will regularly assess if faricimab is working for you and if you are likely to benefit from continued treatment.

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## Who can have faricimab?

Adults with vision loss due to diabetic macular oedema or wet AMD can have faricimab. Your doctor can advise if faricimab is a suitable treatment for you.

## Why was faricimab recommended for subsidy?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Faricimab was recommended for subsidy because its benefit in improving vision for patients with diabetic macular oedema or wet AMD justifies its cost.

Aflibercept was not recommended for subsidy because its benefits do not justify its cost compared with faricimab. If you need aflibercept for this condition, you can speak to a medical social worker to find out if there is other financial assistance available to help with the cost of treatment.

## What does listing on the MAF mean for me?

The MAF helps people pay for treatments that are clinically necessary. If your doctor prescribes faricimab 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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