

Plain English Summary

Injectable drugs for treating high cholesterol

What does the guidance say?

Evolocumab is recommended for listing on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) for government subsidy for treating adults with hypercholesterolaemia or mixed dyslipidaemia who meet certain clinical criteria.

Alirocumab and inclisiran are not recommended for government subsidy.

What is hypercholesterolaemia?

Cholesterol is a type of fat made by your liver to help you digest food. It can also be found in certain foods such as meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products. There are two types of cholesterol: low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-c), commonly known as “bad” cholesterol, and high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-c) which is considered “good” cholesterol.

People with hypercholesterolaemia have high levels of LDL-c in their blood which can block blood vessels, making them hard and narrow (atherosclerosis). Over time, this can lead to cardiovascular events such as a heart attack or stroke.

For some people, hypercholesterolaemia is caused by abnormal genes (familial hypercholesterolaemia). However, it is more common to have non-familial hypercholesterolaemia caused by lifestyle factors such as an unhealthy diet, not exercising enough, being overweight, smoking or drinking too much alcohol.

What is mixed dyslipidaemia?

Triglycerides are fat in the blood that help the body store excess energy from food. People with mixed dyslipidaemia have high levels of both LDL-c and triglycerides and low levels of HDL-c in their blood. Without lifestyle changes and treatment, they have a high risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

What is evolocumab?

Evolocumab belongs to a group of medicines called proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9 (PCSK9) inhibitors which help the liver remove cholesterol from the blood. It is given as an injection under the skin usually in combination with a statin or with other oral lipid lowering drugs.

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

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Who can have evolocumab?

Patients can have evolocumab if they have hypercholesterolaemia or mixed dyslipidaemia that has not been well controlled after taking statins or oral lipid lowering drugs for at least 12 weeks. Your doctor can advise if evolocumab is a suitable treatment for you.

Why was evolocumab recommended for subsidy?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Evolocumab was recommended for subsidy because its benefit in reducing LDL-c levels and decreasing the risk of cardiovascular disease for certain patients with hypercholesterolaemia or mixed dyslipidaemia justifies its cost.

Alirocumab and inclisiran were not recommended for subsidy because their benefits do not justify their costs. If you need alirocumab or inclisiran, 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 evolocumab 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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