

## Plain English Summary

# Trastuzumab deruxtecan for previously treated HER2-positive advanced gastric cancer

## What does the guidance say?

Trastuzumab deruxtecan is not recommended for government subsidy for patients with HER2-positive locally advanced or metastatic gastric or gastroesophageal junction (GEJ) cancer who have had at least two previous treatments, but their condition has continued to worsen. It is claimable under MediShield Life.

## What is trastuzumab deruxtecan?

Trastuzumab deruxtecan belongs to a group of targeted medicines called antibody-drug conjugates. It specifically targets the HER2 (human epidermal growth factor receptor 2) protein found on cancer cells and stops the cancer from growing. Doctors will usually prescribe trastuzumab deruxtecan for patients with HER2-positive gastric or GEJ cancer that has spread nearby from where it started (locally advanced) or to other parts of the body (metastatic) despite having at least two prior treatments. It is given as a slow drip into a vein (intravenously).

## 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. Trastuzumab deruxtecan was not recommended for subsidy because its benefits for patients with HER2-positive advanced gastric or GEJ cancer do not justify its cost. If you need trastuzumab deruxtecan, 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 is HER2-positive gastric cancer?

Gastric cancer occurs when cells grow uncontrollably and form a mass (tumour) in the stomach. The cancer can also affect the area where the oesophagus meets the stomach. This is called gastroesophageal junction (GEJ) cancer. Symptoms of gastric or GEJ cancer can include difficulty swallowing, feeling full or bloated after eating, loss of appetite, heartburn, and unexplained weight loss.

Some gastric or GEJ cancers have too much of a protein called HER2 on the surface of their cells which encourages the cancer cells to divide and grow. This is known as HER2-positive cancer. About 1 in 5 people with gastric or GEJ cancer have HER2-positive disease. Doctors will determine which treatments are needed depending on the types of receptors present and which treatments have already been tried.

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## Is this the right treatment for me?

There are different types of treatments available for HER2-positive advanced gastric or GEJ cancer. Your doctor may recommend you have trastuzumab deruxtecan when 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 much does the treatment cost?
- 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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 Agency for Care Effectiveness - ACE

 Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE)

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