

Plain English Summary

Trastuzumab deruxtecan for previously treated HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer

What does the guidance say?

Trastuzumab deruxtecan is not recommended for government subsidy for patients with unresectable or metastatic HER2-positive breast cancer who have had prior anti-HER2 treatment.

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. 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 breast 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 breast cancer?

Breast cancer occurs when abnormal cells grow uncontrollably in the ducts or lobes of the breast and spread into the surrounding breast tissue. When the cancer spreads to other parts of the body and cannot be removed with surgery (unresectable), this is known as advanced or metastatic disease.

Some breast cancer cells have too much of a protein (receptor) called HER2 which encourages the cancer cells to divide and grow. This is known as HER2-positive breast cancer. About 1 in 5 people with breast cancer have HER2-positive cancer. Doctors determine which drug treatments are needed depending on whether different receptors are present or not.

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Is this the right treatment for me?

There are different types of treatments available for HER2-positive advanced breast 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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