

Plain English Summary

Treatments for ALK mutation-positive advanced non-small-cell lung cancer

What does the guidance say?

Ceritinib is recommended for listing on the Standard Drug List (SDL) and alectinib, brigatinib and lorlatinib are recommended for listing on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) for government funding for patients with locally advanced or metastatic anaplastic lymphoma kinase (ALK) mutation-positive non-small-cell lung cancer.

Crizotinib is not recommended for funding for this condition.

What is non-small-cell lung cancer (NSCLC)?

Lung cancer occurs when abnormal cells grow uncontrollably in one or both of the lungs. Common symptoms of lung cancer include coughing, chest pain and trouble breathing.

Doctors classify lung cancer into different subtypes depending on the type of cells in the lung that are affected. Non-small-cell lung cancer (NSCLC) is the most common type of lung cancer. When the cancer spreads to both lungs or other parts of the body, this is known as advanced or metastatic disease.

What is ALK mutation-positive NSCLC?

The ALK gene helps cells grow and divide. Some patients with NSCLC have a mutation in the ALK gene which causes cancer cells to grow and spread. This is known as ALK mutation-positive NSCLC. Doctors test patients with lung cancer to see if they have an ALK mutation so they can determine which treatment will work best. About 5% of people with NSCLC have an ALK mutation.

What are alectinib, brigatinib, ceritinib and lorlatinib?

Alectinib, brigatinib, ceritinib and lorlatinib belong to a group of medicines called tyrosine kinase inhibitors that help to slow or stop the growth of cancer cells that have an ALK mutation. They are taken orally each day. Your doctor will tell you how much you need to take and how long you need to take it for.

Who can have alectinib, brigatinib, ceritinib or lorlatinib?

Adults with non-small-cell lung cancer can have alectinib, brigatinib, ceritinib or lorlatinib if they have a mutation in the ALK gene confirmed by a diagnostic test, and the cancer has spread to both lungs or to other organs.

Your doctor can advise if any of these treatments are suitable for you.

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Why were they recommended for funding?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Alectinib, brigatinib, ceritinib and lorlatinib were recommended for funding because their benefit in improving survival for certain patients with advanced ALK mutation-positive NSCLC justifies their costs.

Crizotinib was not recommended for funding because its benefits do not justify its cost. If you need crizotinib, 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.

Ceritinib 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.


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

All four drugs 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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 Agency for Care Effectiveness - ACE

 Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE)

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This summary is not, and should not be regarded as, a substitute for professional or medical advice. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare professional about any medical condition.

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