

Plain English Summary

Treatments for RAS wild-type metastatic colorectal cancer

What does the guidance say?

Cetuximab and panitumumab are recommended for listing on the Standard Drug List (SDL) for government funding for patients with RAS wild-type metastatic colorectal cancer.

What is metastatic colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer occurs when cells grow uncontrollably and form a mass (tumour) in the colon or rectum of the large bowel. If the tumour spreads to other parts of the body, this is known as metastatic disease. Symptoms of colorectal cancer can include blood in stools, a change in bowel habits, unexplained weight loss and pain around the bowel. Sometimes, the tumour can cause a blockage in the bowel.

The RAS gene helps control cell growth. Normal RAS genes are also called “wild-type” RAS genes. Some patients with colorectal cancer have a mutation in the RAS gene which causes cancer cells to grow quickly and spread. This is known as RAS mutation-positive cancer.

Doctors test patients to see if they have a RAS mutation so they can determine the appropriate type of treatment. Up to 50% of people with colorectal cancer have a RAS mutation.

What are cetuximab and panitumumab?

Cetuximab and panitumumab belong to a group of medicines called epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) antibodies that help to slow or stop the growth of cancer cells.

Both treatments are given on their own or with chemotherapy as a slow drip into a vein (intravenously) for patients with RAS wild-type metastatic colorectal cancer.

Your doctor will tell you which treatment is most suitable for you, how much you need to have and how long you need to receive it for.

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Who can have cetuximab and panitumumab?

Adults with metastatic colorectal cancer and normal RAS genes confirmed by a diagnostic test can have cetuximab or panitumumab.

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

Why were they recommended for listing on SDL?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Cetuximab and panitumumab were recommended for funding because their benefit in improving survival for certain patients with metastatic colorectal cancer justifies their costs.

What does listing on SDL mean for me?

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.

Cetuximab and panitumumab 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.

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 Agency for Care Effectiveness - ACE

 Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE)

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