

## Plain English Summary

# Ribociclib for adjuvant treatment of HR-positive, HER2-negative early breast cancer

### What does the guidance say?

Ribociclib, in combination with an aromatase inhibitor, is recommended for government funding for adjuvant treatment of patients with HR-positive, HER2-negative stage II and III early breast cancer who meet certain clinical criteria. It is listed on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) and can be claimed under MediShield Life.

### What is HR-positive, HER2-negative early 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. Doctors determine the stage of breast cancer based on the size and location of the tumor and whether the cancer has spread locally or to other parts of the body. The stage ranges from stage 0 (cancer is contained in one area and has not spread) to stage IV (cancer has spread to other parts of the body). When the cancer has not spread to other parts of the body, it is known as early breast cancer.

The first treatment for breast cancer is often surgery to remove it. After surgery, patients may need to take other treatments to destroy any remaining cancer cells and reduce the risk of the breast cancer coming back. This type of treatment given after surgery is known as adjuvant therapy.

Estrogen and progesterone are hormones that play an important role in the female reproductive system. Sometimes breast cancer cells contain proteins (receptors) that bind to these hormones and help the cancer to grow. This is known as HR (hormone receptor)-positive breast cancer.

Some breast cancer cells have too much of a protein (receptor) called HER2 (human epidermal growth factor receptor 2) on the surface of their cells which encourages cancer cells to divide and grow. This is known as HER2-positive breast cancer. Conversely, breast cancers with HER2 levels below a certain threshold are known as HER2-negative. Doctors determine which treatments are most likely to work best depending on the types of receptors present and which treatments have already been tried.

### What is ribociclib?

Ribociclib belongs to a group of targeted medicines called cyclin-dependent kinase (CDK) inhibitors. It helps slow cancer growth by blocking CDK proteins that control how cancer cells grow and divide. It is taken orally in combination with another type of cancer treatment called an aromatase inhibitor. 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 ribociclib?

Patients can have ribociclib, in combination with an aromatase inhibitor as an adjuvant treatment if they have HR-positive, HER2-negative stage II and III early breast cancer and meet certain clinical criteria. Treatment with ribociclib should be stopped after three years.

Your doctor can advise if ribociclib is a suitable treatment for you.

## Why was ribociclib recommended for funding?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Ribociclib was recommended for government funding because its benefit as an adjuvant treatment for patients with HR-positive, HER2-negative early breast cancer justifies its cost.

## What does listing on MAF mean for me?

The MAF helps people pay for treatments that are clinically effective and cost effective. If your doctor prescribes ribociclib in combination with an aromatase inhibitor for you, and you meet the MAF criteria, your treatment cost will be subsidised by 40% to 75%.

Ribociclib has also been included on the Cancer Drug List (CDL) and is claimable under MediShield Life. The subsidy class and MediShield Life claim limits are available [here](#).

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