

Plain English Summary

Sodium zirconium cyclosilicate for treating hyperkalaemia

What does the guidance say?

Sodium zirconium cyclosilicate 5 g powder is recommended for listing on the Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) for government subsidy for patients with hyperkalaemia who meet certain clinical criteria.

Sodium zirconium cyclosilicate 10 g powder is not recommended for subsidy for this condition.

What is hyperkalaemia?

Hyperkalaemia occurs when there is too much potassium in your blood. Potassium is an important nutrient that is found in many foods and drinks you consume. It helps your nerves and muscles function properly. Normally, your kidneys keep a balanced level of potassium in your body by removing any excess through urine. However, potassium builds up to abnormal levels in people with hyperkalaemia.

Patients with medical conditions such as chronic kidney disease are at a higher risk of hyperkalaemia. Chronic kidney disease is a long-term condition that occurs when the kidneys become damaged and are unable to filter waste and remove excess water from the body. It is divided into five stages based how well the kidneys are working, ranging from stage 1 (normal function) to stage 5 (kidney failure). Certain medicines such as RAAS (renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system) inhibitors, supplements or food can also contribute to hyperkalaemia.

Mild hyperkalaemia typically does not cause symptoms. As the condition worsens, symptoms can include nausea, numbness, muscle weakness or irregular heartbeat.

What is sodium zirconium cyclosilicate?

Sodium zirconium cyclosilicate belongs to a group of medicines called potassium binders. It attaches to the excess potassium in the digestive tract to help remove it from the body. It is taken orally. 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 sodium zirconium cyclosilicate?

Patients with chronic kidney disease stage 3b to 5 who are not on dialysis can have sodium zirconium cyclosilicate to treat hyperkalaemia if they:

- have had at least two episodes of hyperkalaemia in a year; and
- are being treated with a RAAS inhibitor or require one but are unable to tolerate it due to hyperkalaemia.

Your doctor can advise if sodium zirconium cyclosilicate is a suitable treatment for you.

Why was it recommended for subsidy?

ACE evaluates how well a treatment works in relation to how much it costs compared to other treatments. Sodium zirconium cyclosilicate was recommended for government subsidy because its benefits in treating certain patients with hyperkalaemia justify its cost.

What does listing on the MAF mean for me?

The MAF helps people pay for treatments that are clinically effective and cost effective. If your doctor prescribes sodium zirconium cyclosilicate for you, and you meet the MAF criteria, your treatment cost will be subsidised by 40% to 75%.

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