



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

1 May 2008

NEW PBS LISTINGS FOR MAY 2008

From today, women with advanced breast cancer, patients with hypertension, and people suffering from osteoporosis will benefit from changes to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

The breast cancer drug lapatinib (TYKERB) will be listed on the PBS from 1 May 2008. TYKERB is a new treatment for metastatic or advanced breast cancer, and can be used after the disease has progressed despite treatment with the other drug used specifically for HER-2 positive breast cancer, trastuzumab (HERCEPTIN®). Unlike HERCEPTIN, which must be administered intravenously, TYKERB is an oral medicine that can be taken at home, in combination with another anti-cancer drug, capecitabine.

This means that women suffering from this particularly aggressive form of breast cancer will have access to a new drug on the PBS that will improve quality of life and prolong some lives. HER-2 positive breast cancer is an aggressive form of cancer that particularly impacts upon younger women. Around 87 per cent of patients diagnosed with advanced breast cancer will die from the disease within five years. About 2,000 Australians are diagnosed with HER-2 positive breast cancer each year.

The listing of lercanidipine hydrochloride with enalapril maleate (Zan-Extra) will assist people with hypertension by lowering their blood pressure. This combination tablet can be used when exclusive treatment by either lercanidipine hydrochloride or enalapril maleate is not sufficient to control a person's hypertension.

Osteoporosis patients will also benefit from the listing of a new combination product. Risedronate sodium and calcium carbonate with vitamin D3 (Actonel Combi D) is being added to the PBS for the treatment of patients with osteoporosis who have an inadequate intake of calcium and have low vitamin D levels. This will be available for patients with established osteoporosis following a fracture due to minimal trauma, or those aged 70 years or over and have a bone mineral density of -3.0 or less. This combination product is a convenient form that includes three different drugs needed by some people.

Information about medicines subsidised by the Government through the PBS is available at www.pbs.gov.au

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