

PHARMAC

Pharmaceutical Management Agency

Media release

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PHARMAC takes further step in battle with Type 2 diabetes

PHARMAC is giving more people the chance to access the Type 2 diabetes medicine pioglitazone (Actos).

The medicine funding decision is PHARMAC's latest contribution to combating type 2 diabetes. In addition to funding medicines, PHARMAC has also worked with Diabetes NZ to develop resources to help people understand their diabetes and how to manage it.

And PHARMAC's innovative One Heart Many Lives campaign encourages lifestyle changes for people that can help reduce the incidence of heart disease and its close link to the rise in Type 2 diabetes.

PHARMAC's Medical Director Dr Peter Moodie says pioglitazone and related medicines make people more sensitive to the insulin their body produces. This in turn makes them less likely to experience some of the effects of diabetes.

Dr Moodie says: "The incidence of Type 2 diabetes is increasing rapidly. For many of these people lifestyle changes such as changes in their diet or becoming more physically active can make a big difference."

"However, medicines such as pioglitazone are important in managing the condition so it is pleasing to have reached a new agreement with Eli Lilly which has made this access widening possible."

Approximately 100,000 New Zealanders are thought to have Type 2 diabetes and this number is growing by up to 10% each year.

The changes will mean the medicine can be prescribed by GPs as well as specialists.

"This is an important step in reaching Maori and Pacific people who are particularly prone to Type 2 diabetes," says Dr Moodie.

Other changes include reducing the threshold in blood glucose measure (HbA1c levels), and reducing the body mass index measurement used to determine which patients are eligible.

Pioglitazone has been funded since 2004 and the latest moves will see an additional 2700 people using it within four years, doubling the current number.

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For more information contact Simon England 021 863 342