



Find out more

We recommend you talk with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns about changing brands. They know you and your circumstances best.

You can also contact PHARMAC on:

- enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz
- 0800 660 050



PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

Rituximab: Riximyo is the new funded brand

Riximyo is a biosimilar medicine

Riximyo is a 'biosimilar medicine'. This means that Riximyo is very similar to, but not exactly the same as, Mabthera. Even though there are small differences, Riximyo has been assessed as being as safe and effective as Mabthera.

You can read about the clinical studies showing the benefits of Riximyo in the bpac article *Biosimilars; the future of biological prescribing* at www.bpac.org.nz

New Zealand clinical experts are supportive of this change

A decision to change the brand of a medicine, especially one as important as rituximab, isn't taken lightly. Before we made this decision, we asked experts who treat people with rituximab for their advice.

They looked at the clinical evidence for Riximyo and were supportive of this decision. You can find more details of what was discussed by clinical experts with links to the full records of those meeting on the PHARMAC website www.pharmac.govt.nz/rituximab.

Riximyo is approved by Medsafe for use in New Zealand

The New Zealand Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Authority (Medsafe) is responsible for the regulation of medicines in New Zealand.

Medsafe reviewed how Riximyo was developed, the quality of the medicine, and how patients have responded to Riximyo to ensure it is highly similar Mabthera before approving it for use in New Zealand.

Riximyo is used in many other countries

Although Riximyo is new to New Zealand, Riximyo has been used in Australia, Germany, the UK and France safely and effectively.

Improving access to medicines

This decision means rituximab will be funded for more New Zealanders with cancers and inflammatory conditions.

Our job is to make sure New Zealanders have access to the medicines they need. Making changes to the brands of funded medicines helps us achieve that by freeing up our limited budget to fund other medicines for New Zealanders.



Rituximab is a medicine used to treat a range of conditions including blood cancers, rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune conditions.

What's changing?

There will be two brands of rituximab funded and your brand may be changing;

- **Riximyo** is the newly funded brand and will be the funded brand for people using rituximab for all conditions apart from those with rheumatoid arthritis.
- **Mabthera** is the currently funded brand and will remain funded for people using this for rheumatoid arthritis.

When will this happen?

Riximyo will be available from 1 March 2020, and between 1 March 2020 and 1 December 2020 Mabthera will continue to be funded for patients currently using Mabthera. If your current treatment course of rituximab finishes before 1 December 2020 you may be able to complete the course on Mabthera.

Talk to your health care team about when you will start on the new brand of rituximab.

Mabthera remains funded for patients with rheumatoid arthritis

There are legal patents in New Zealand which means Mabthera is the only brand that can be used for patients with rheumatoid arthritis at this time.