Medicines Bulletin – Liraglutide (GLP-1 agonist)

New patients able to start from 1 March 2025

West Coast Health
Community Wellbeing Services

Information for prescribers

What's the update?

From 1 March 2025, Pharmac are removing the restriction which was limiting new people from starting treatment with liraglutide (branded as Victoza). This means that people with type 2 diabetes, who meet eligibility criteria, will be able to start treatment. Liraglutide is a GLP-1 receptor agonist, like dulaglutide.

While the supply of both liraglutide and dulaglutide remains an ongoing issue, the supplier of liraglutide (Novo Nordisk) has indicated that supply has stabilised. The level of supply for dulaglutide remains uncertain – therefore the restriction limiting new people from starting this treatment will remain in place at this time, but this situation will be reviewed regularly.

Criteria for access:

Funded access to liraglutide is via special authority. Approvals are valid without further renewal. Patients must: have type 2 diabetes; not have reached target HbA1c of 53mmol/mol or less while being treated with other funded diabetes medicines; and any of the following: Māori or Pacific, have pre-existing cardiovascular disease or risk, diabetic kidney disease. The criteria are intended to describe patients at high risk of cardiovascular or renal complications of diabetes.

Dose and notes

Dosing is initially 600mcg daily for at least one week, then increased to 1.2mg daily for at least one week. If necessary, increase to 1.8mg daily.

DPP-4 inhibitors such as vildagliptin should be stopped prior to commencing a GLP-1 receptor agonist.

Liraglutide is also available in New Zealand as Saxenda – this is a separately marketed product registered for use in weight management only – this remains unfunded.

References

Pharmac - Liraglutide Update NZF – Liraglutide Healthify - Liraglutide Initiating treatment with dulaglutide or liraglutide for type 2 diabetes | He Ako Hiringa

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