

New treatment option now reimbursed for Australians living with an incurable inflammatory bowel disease

Australians living with the life-long, incurable inflammatory bowel disease, ulcerative colitis [UL-sur-uh-tiv koe-LIE-tis] (UC), can now access a new reimbursed treatment option with the listing of ZEPOSIA (ozanimod) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) from Monday, May 1, 2023.¹

ZEPOSIA (ozanimod) - a daily oral medication that reduces symptoms of UC by controlling immune cells that cause inflammation in the large intestine² - is now subsidised for adults living with moderately to severely active UC who have not responded to other treatments.

According to Gastroenterologist, Inflammatory Bowel Disease Clinical Service Lead, and Crohn's Colitis Cure board member, Professor Susan Connor, Sydney, multiple treatment options are required to effectively manage the disease, given its highly individual, and varying nature.

"Ulcerative colitis is a chronic, life-long, inflammatory bowel disease with no cure. It is also a young person's disease, which is most commonly diagnosed between 15 to 25 years of age. This means people are living with symptoms of the disease for decades, which can change and worsen over time.

"Inflammation can affect each individual in a different way, and differently throughout the course of their lifetime. As such, the effective management of ulcerative colitis requires multiple different treatment options," said Prof Connor.

"UC treatments aim to reduce inflammation to improve symptoms and heal the bowel, to ultimately improve the quality of life for those living with the disease.

"As clinicians, we welcome today's reimbursement of another treatment option for Australians living with ulcerative colitis," Prof Connor said.

An estimated 33,000 Australians are currently living with UC,³ one of the two main inflammatory bowel diseases (IBDs), alongside Crohn's disease.⁴ Australia has one of the highest rates of IBD in the Western world.^{5,6}

By 2030, almost 300,000 Australians (2 per cent) are anticipated to be living with IBD.⁷

Those with UC often differ in how they experience symptoms, which can be mild or serious, depending on how much of the large intestine has become inflamed and its severity.⁸ Common UC symptoms can include diarrhoea, abdominal pain, weight loss, nausea or loss of appetite, fatigue and blood present in the stool.⁹⁻¹¹ People living with UC also report a sudden urgency to use the bathroom.¹²

UC is characterised by periods of remission, when symptoms are controlled; and flare-ups, during which symptoms return or worsen.¹³ As such, people living with UC experience increased psychological stress and anxiety relating to the uncertain nature of their disease, such as when a flare-up may occur, or the need to find a restroom quickly.¹²

Australian entrepreneur, Linda, 35, Noosa, has lived with UC for almost two decades. She was diagnosed with the disease at just 16 years of age after being hospitalised with intense pain, bowel bleeding, and extreme fatigue.

“I felt shocked and confused when I was diagnosed with UC. It was so hard to process at such a young age. Since then, living with UC has been like a Quentin Tarantino film - it’s guts, gore, bloody, and dark. “UC is an incredibly invisible and challenging disease to manage and control. Currently, there is no cure, only periods of remission,” said Linda.

“It’s also a disease people don’t discuss, especially young people. There’s so much stigma and shame around inflammatory bowel diseases, which frustratingly, get mistaken for Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).

“Having UC was a huge obstacle when starting my business from scratch. It meant I couldn’t travel abroad for a long time, as I was too worried about being unwell when overseas. Eating or drinking something wrong could result in serious health complications for me,” Linda said.

“The PBS reimbursement of another UC medication will help so many people. The cost of living for UC patients is much higher than the general population. I spend thousands a year on complimentary and holistic medicine to support chronic nutritional deficiencies, have regular doctors’ appointments and tests not to mention the time spent feeling unwell and recovering.”

Crohn’s & Colitis Australia CEO, Leanne Raven, Melbourne, welcomed today’s reimbursement of a new treatment option for Australians living with UC.

“UC is most frequently diagnosed in young people when education, career progression, starting relationships and families are important factors in their lives. Improving awareness, education and treatment options which support young Australians during these stages of life are critical.

“We advocate for access to the best treatments and services, to help improve the quality of life for those living with IBD. The reimbursement of another treatment option for Australians living with UC is welcome news for the IBD community,” said Leanne.

Managing Director of Bristol Myers Squibb Australia and New Zealand, Leah Goodman, said today’s listing represents an important milestone for the UC patient community in expanding the offering of novel oral treatment options.

“We share this achievement with the UC patient community, and are pleased another subsidised treatment option is available from today.”

About ZEPOSIA (ozanimod)

ZEPOSIA is an oral medicine that treats UC by reducing inflammation in the colon.² It does this by binding to a protein on immune cells called the sphingosine-1-phosphate (S1P) receptor, signalling them to slow down their entry into the colon, reducing UC symptoms.²

ZEPOSIA was approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) in 2022 and is now available on the PBS from May 1, 2023, for the treatment of moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis (UC) in adults.¹

ZEPOSIA is available only with a doctor’s prescription. For adults, one 920 microgram dose is taken orally each day, with or without food.¹ For more information, refer to the ZEPOSIA® Product Information (PI) [here](#) and the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) [here](#) or speak to your doctor or pharmacist.

Disclosure

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Bristol Myers Squibb: Pioneering Paths Forward in Immunology to Transform Patients' Lives

Bristol Myers Squibb is inspired by a single vision - transforming patients' lives through science. For people living with immune-mediated diseases, the debilitating reality of enduring chronic symptoms and disease progression can take a toll on their physical, emotional and social well-being, making simple tasks and daily life a challenge. Driven by our deep understanding of the immune system that spans over 20 years of experience, and our passion to help patients, the company continues to pursue pathbreaking science with the goal of delivering meaningful solutions that address unmet needs in rheumatology, gastroenterology, dermatology and multiple sclerosis.

Further information is available on request from Bristol Myers Squibb Australia Pty Ltd, ABN 33 004 333 322, Level 2, 4 Nexus Court, Mulgrave, VIC, 3170. ®Registered Trademark. Prepared: APRIL 2023. 2084-AU-2300061

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