

TECFIDERA® (DIMETHYL FUMARATE) FUNDED IN NEW ZEALAND AS A NEW TREATMENT FOR RELAPSING MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS FROM FEBRUARY 2016

Auckland, New Zealand – Friday 29th January 2016: New Zealand multiple sclerosis (MS) patients will soon have affordable access to an additional option for the treatment of relapsing multiple sclerosis (MS) with news that PHARMAC will fund TECFIDERA® (dimethyl fumarate).

TECFIDERA, supplied by Biogen NZ Biopharma Ltd, will be available and subsidised for suitable MS patients in New Zealand who meet the criteria outlined in the Pharmaceutical Schedule from the 1st of February 2016.

TECFIDERA is indicated for the treatment of patients with relapsing multiple sclerosis to delay the progression of physical disability and to reduce the frequency of relapses.¹

Neurologist Dr Ernest Willoughby says he welcomes new options for MS patients in New Zealand.

“New Zealanders with Multiple Sclerosis need affordable access to effective treatments that slow the progression of this disease,” said Dr Willoughby. “Different patients respond to different treatments and side-effects vary, so access to new treatment options is an important step forward in the management of multiple sclerosis.”

According to **Joerg Hermans, Managing Director, Biogen Australia and New Zealand**, over 2,400 Australian patients have been treated with Tecfidera since its reimbursement at the end of 2013^[2], and Biogen is very pleased it will now be more accessible to people in New Zealand with MS.

“We are thrilled to be able to bring our therapy, TECFIDERA, to the New Zealand multiple sclerosis community. The reimbursement is a major milestone for Biogen. We are deeply committed to improving the lives of people with MS around the world,” said Mr Hermans.

Multiple sclerosis is an autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system (CNS) which includes the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves.

There are approximately 3000 people in New Zealand diagnosed with MS.

About Biogen New Zealand: Biogen New Zealand Biopharma Limited is the New Zealand affiliate of Biogen. Through cutting-edge science and medicine, Biogen discovers, develops and delivers to patients worldwide innovative therapies for the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases, hemophilia and autoimmune disorders. Founded in 1978, Biogen is the world’s oldest independent biotechnology company. Patients worldwide benefit from its leading multiple sclerosis therapies. For additional information about the company, please visit <http://www.biogen.com.au/>.

REFERENCES:

TECFIDERA (dimethyl fumarate) Data Sheet, Accessed 18 November 2015:

<http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/Profs/Datasheet/t/tecfideracap.pdf>

Multiple Sclerosis Society of New Zealand, Accessed 20th October

2015: <http://www.msnz.org.nz/Page.aspx?pid=277>

TECFIDERA® is a Prescription Medicine containing 120 mg or 240 mg dimethyl fumarate in a modified release capsule for oral use. Approved Use: TECFIDERA is used for the treatment of patients with relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis (MS) to reduce the frequency of relapse and delay the progression of disability. Do not take TECFIDERA if you have any allergy to dimethyl fumarate or any ingredients listed in the Consumer Medicine Information. Like all medicines, TECFIDERA has risks and benefits. Ask your doctor if TECFIDERA is right for you. Use strictly as directed. If your symptoms continue or you have side effects, see your doctor, MS nurse or other health professional. Side Effects: Very common side effects include: flushing, diarrhea, nausea, stomach pain or cramps. Common side effects include: gastroenteritis, low white blood cell counts (lymphopenia, leucopenia), burning sensation, hot flush, vomiting, indigestion (dyspepsia), gastritis, gastrointestinal disorder, itchy skin (pruritus), rash, pink or red skin (erythema), feeling hot, protein (albumin) present in urine, increased liver enzymes (aspartate aminotransferase and alanine aminotransferase) and white blood cell count decreased. Serious side effects include: signs of an infection. Serious side effects are rare. Further Information: For further information, see the TECFIDERA Consumer Medicine Information available at www.medsafe.govt.nz or by calling 0800 852 289.