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# Australia makes severe back-neck pain & cardiovascular treatment affordable

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**Australians can avail access to treatment option through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) which would otherwise be very expensive**



Thousands of Australians with debilitating back and joint pain will have access to a life changing treatment option through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

From December 1, access to Taltz® (ixekizumab) on the PBS will be expanded for patients with active ankylosing spondylitis. Ankylosing spondylitis is an inflammatory condition, which can cause some small bones in the spine to fuse. It leads to reduced flexibility and can lead to severe back and neck pain. Without the PBS subsidy, up to 8,000 patients would pay more than $22,000 per year for this treatment.

There's also good news for almost 50,000 Australians suffering from heart and cardiovascular conditions. Access to Xarelto® (rivaroxaban) will be expanded to include the treatment of patients at high risk of recurrent cardiovascular events with coronary artery disease or peripheral artery disease. Without PBS subsidy, these patients would pay more than $790 per year for treatment. Up to 46,900 patients every year could benefit from this listing.

Coronary artery disease and peripheral artery disease are types of atherosclerosis, which occurs when arteries that supply blood to the heart or limbs become hardened and narrowed, due to a build-up of cholesterol and/or plaque fatty deposits. Coronary artery disease and peripheral artery disease increase risk of blood clots and reduce blood flow to key areas of the body such as the heart, brain or limbs.

Australians who are living with these conditions have an increased risk of heart attack or stroke which can lead to disability, amputation or death.

The government is continuing to make important medicines available to Australians at affordable prices. These PBS listings have been recommended by the independent Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

Since 2013, the Government has approved more than 2,500 new or amended listings on the PBS at an overall investment by the Government of $11.8 billion.