



## Exemestane (Aromasin) and letrozole ( Femara) listings extended to early breast cancer in postmenopausal women



The PBS restriction for two aromatase inhibitors, exemestane and letrozole, was extended on 1 December 2006 to include adjuvant treatment of hormone-dependent early breast cancer in postmenopausal women. These drugs were previously listed as restricted benefits for advanced breast cancer only — the new listings bring them into line with anastrozole (Arimidex), which is also available on the PBS for early breast cancer [refer to the NPS RADAR review "Anastrozole (Arimidex) for the treatment of hormone-dependent early breast cancer in postmenopausal women" (December 2005 issue)].

Exemestane may be prescribed on the PBS for hormone-dependent early breast cancer after a minimum of 2 years' treatment with tamoxifen. Letrozole may be prescribed as initial adjuvant hormonal treatment or be started after 2-3 years of tamoxifen.<sup>1</sup> The total duration of PBS-subsidised adjuvant hormonal treatment with an aromatase inhibitor (or with tamoxifen followed by an aromatase inhibitor) should not exceed 5 years.

### References

1. National Breast Cancer Centre (NBCC). Recommendations for aromatase inhibitors as adjuvant endocrine therapy for postmenopausal women with hormone receptor-positive early breast cancer. Clinical Practice Guideline. Camperdown: NBCC, 2006. [http://www.nbcc.org.au/bestpractice/documents/Aromatise\\_000.pdf](http://www.nbcc.org.au/bestpractice/documents/Aromatise_000.pdf) (accessed 18 October 2006).

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