

Clozapine: Proposed changes to blood monitoring and prescribing requirements

Consultation questions for consumers and families

August 2025

Overview

This Medsafe consultation seeks your feedback on proposed changes to the blood monitoring for clozapine. We are running this consultation on behalf of the companies that distribute clozapine-containing medicines in New Zealand.

Clozapine is an antipsychotic medicine used to treat schizophrenia that has not responded to other antipsychotics (treatment-resistant schizophrenia). For safety reasons, there are restrictions around clozapine use in New Zealand and other countries. In some people, clozapine can lower the number of white blood cells, such as neutrophils (neutropenia) which increases the risk of severe infections. Currently, people taking clozapine must have regular blood tests throughout treatment to check for this side effect. The blood test results are required before the pharmacist can dispense clozapine to the person.

Who can take part?

This consultation is for people taking clozapine. A family member or caregiver can also answer on someone's behalf. There is a separate consultation for health professionals [here](#).

To assist in the analysis of submissions, Medsafe will only accept submissions made through this consultation website. However, we have attached the consultation document below as a PDF, and you can view it online, download it and/or print it.

Other information

If you have any questions or requests about your response, please contact us at medsafeadrquery@health.govt.nz.

Related

- Consultation questions *[the PDF document is attached in the online survey]*

What happens next?

We will consider the responses and decide what changes, if any, to recommend to the Minister's delegate.

We will publish the outcome on the [Outcome of Consultations](#) web page on the Medsafe website.

Any changes to the clozapine monitoring requirements will take time to implement. This will include time to support healthcare professionals and people to understand and be ready for the changes.

Introduction

This consultation is for people taking clozapine. A family member or caregiver can also answer on someone's behalf. There is a separate consultation for health professionals [here](#).

Please complete the following introductory questions before starting the survey.

Questions 1 and 2 are compulsory and you need to answer them before moving to the rest of the survey.

Publishing submissions

We intend to publish the submissions from this survey, but we will only publish your submission if you give permission. If you do not want your submission published, please let us know below.

Official Information Act requests

Your submission will be subject to requests made under the Official Information Act (even if it hasn't been published). Please let us know of any information that you would like us to remove from your response. We will take this into account when responding to requests under the Official Information Act.

1. Please select from below which best describes you.

(Required)

- ☐ Person who takes clozapine
- ☐ Family member or caregiver of someone who takes clozapine

2. May we publish your submission?

(Required)

- ☐ Yes. You may publish this submission.
- ☐ No. Do not publish this submission.

3. Please describe the information in your submission that you would like us to withhold.

Clozapine blood monitoring questions

4. Would it help you if your blood tests happen less often?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please tell us more about your answer:

5. Would you feel comfortable if your regular blood tests stopped after a few years of taking clozapine?

- ☐ No – not comfortable
- ☐ Yes – after 1 year
- ☐ Yes – after 2 years
- ☐ Yes – after 3 years
- ☐ Other. Please suggest an alternative below

Please tell us more about your answer:

6. Do you feel confident that you can tell if you have an infection?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No.

Please tell us more about your answer:

7. Do you feel confident to tell your health professional you might have an infection?

- ☐ Yes – I know how to tell if I have an infection and who to tell
- ☐ Somewhat – I know how to tell if I have an infection, but not who to tell
- ☐ Somewhat – I don't know how to tell if I have an infection, but I know who to talk to
- ☐ No

Please tell us more about your answer:

8. How would you like to learn about signs of an infection? (You can choose more than one answer.)

- ☐ I don't need any information
- ☐ Conversation with a health professional
- ☐ Written information
- ☐ Website information
- ☐ Phone app
- ☐ Other. Please suggest additional ways below.

9. Are there any downsides of not having regular blood tests?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please tell us more about your answer:

10. If you have a 'red' blood test result (meaning that your white blood cells levels are too low), would you feel comfortable continuing to take clozapine but have extra blood tests while your health professional finds the cause of the red test result?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please tell us more about your answer:

11. If your health professional stopped your clozapine treatment because of a blood test result, would you be willing to try clozapine again in the future?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What information would you need to help you to make that decision?

12. Would you be interested in having a finger prick (point-of-care) blood test, for example in the pharmacy, instead of the current blood test procedure?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about clozapine monitoring?