

# NCPE Assessment

## Plain English Summary

March 2025

**Drug name:** Icosapent ethyl (pronounced eye-koe-sa pent ee-thile) to reduce the risk of cardiovascular events in adult statin-treated patients at high cardiovascular risk with elevated triglycerides ( $\geq 150$  mg/dL [ $\geq 1.7$  mmol/L]) and

- established cardiovascular disease, or
- diabetes, and at least one other cardiovascular risk factor

**Brand name:** Vazkepa®

**HTA ID:** 23006

## What is the NCPE?

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The National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics (NCPE) is a team of experts who look at the health benefits and costs of medicines. The HSE asks us to advise on whether or not a new medicine is good value for money. We give unbiased advice to help the HSE provide the most effective, safe and cost-effective (value for money) treatments for patients.

## How do we make our recommendations?

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Our main focus is on the health benefits and cost effectiveness of a medicine. We look at the wider costs and health benefits associated with a new medicine, for example:

- Does the new medicine work better than other treatments available in Ireland?
- Is the new medicine easier to give or easier to take compared with other treatments available in Ireland?
- Does the new medicine reduce the need for patients to be hospitalised?
- Does the new medicine improve the quality of a patient's life over other treatments available in Ireland?
- Will the new medicine save resources elsewhere within the health system?

We review the information from clinical trials along with the cost and value for money data presented by the pharmaceutical company. We ask doctors and other healthcare professionals for advice about any health benefits of the new medicine compared with current treatments. We also ask patient organisations to send us their views on how the new drug may improve patients' day-to-day experience of living with a disease.

## What is icosapent ethyl used for?

Icosapent ethyl is a medicine for reducing the risk of cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke. It is an add-on treatment in adults being treated with a statin medicine who have high levels of triglycerides in their blood.

## What recommendation has the NCPE made to the HSE?

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We have recommended that the HSE should consider funding icosapent ethyl if its cost

effectiveness (value for money) can be improved. The HSE will consider our recommendation and make the final decision about reimbursement (funding). When making the funding decision, the HSE will also consider the additional [criteria](#) outlined in the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013.

## Why did we make this recommendation?

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After reviewing the data presented by the pharmaceutical company, we concluded that it is not clear that icosapent ethyl works better than other ways to reduce the risk of cardiovascular events in adult statin-treated patients at high cardiovascular risk with elevated triglycerides ( $\geq 150$  mg/dL [ $\geq 1.7$  mmol/L]) and established cardiovascular disease, or diabetes and at least one other cardiovascular risk factor. The price of icosapent ethyl is too high compared with other ways to manage this condition and we consider this medicine to be poor value for money.

## Next steps

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When the HSE receives our recommendation, it will look at all the relevant data about icosapent ethyl. The HSE makes the final decision on reimbursement.

## Where can I get more information?

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You can get more information about icosapent ethyl from the following online options:

- the NCPE Technical Summary Document
- Vazkepa<sup>®</sup> European Public Assessment Report (EPAR) – [Summary for the public](#) or
- searching for icosapent ethyl on our website ([www.ncpe.ie](http://www.ncpe.ie));
- searching for icosapent ethyl on the European Medicines Agency (EMA) website ([www.ema.europa.eu](http://www.ema.europa.eu)).

Please refer to the NCPE website for updated information on the reimbursement status of this medicine.