

8 August 2022

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H2022007244

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to Manatū Hauora (Ministry of Health) on 11 July 2022 for information relating to ivermectin. Medsafe, the New Zealand Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Authority, part of Manatū Hauora, will respond to each part of your request in turn. Medsafe is responsible for the regulation of medicines in New Zealand under the Medicines Act 1981.

There is currently one medicine containing ivermectin approved for use in New Zealand. The medicine is called Stromectol, and it is approved for a number of clinical indications. However, these indications do not include the treatment of COVID-19. More information about Stromectol is available on the Medsafe website here: www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/Datasheet/s/Stromectoltab.pdf. Please note that ivermectin is the name of the active ingredient in Stromectol. Other brands of ivermectin are available overseas. In answering this question I have assumed you are interested in all brands of ivermectin.

*"I am looking for information regarding ivermectin (Stromectol)
- Has any medical practitioner in New Zealand requested right to use ivermectin for prevention or treatment of Covid 19 virus?"*

Medical Practitioners, under section 25 of the Medicines Act 1981, can prescribe medicine for a patient under their care. The Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights places obligations on prescribers to ensure that all treatment meets ethical and professional standards. In prescribing an unapproved medicine or an approved medicine for an unapproved purpose, a prescriber must consider these requirements and should ensure a process of informed consent with the patient is carried out. Further information is available on the Medsafe website at: www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/Rlss/unapp.asp.

Information on the regulation of medicines for the treatment of COVID-19 can be found on the Medsafe website at: www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/medicine-approval-process.asp

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends ivermectin not be used to treat patients with COVID-19 outside of clinical trials. Further information is available at: www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-therapeutics-2022.4.

- Has any medical practitioner in New Zealand requested or presented clinical trials to Medsafe for ivermectin to be used to treat or prevent covid 19 virus?

Medsafe has not received any clinical trial applications under section 30 of the Medicines Act for ivermectin to be used to treat or prevent COVID-19.

- Has New Zealand Government forbid or strongly advised medical practitioners not to prescribe Ivermectin for treatment and prevention of covid 19 virus even that there is strong evidence in many publications around the world that is very useful in preventing and treating Covid 19 virus and helping with long Covid?

- Has New Zealand Government given orders to Medical Council in advising medical practitioners if they prescribe Ivermectin, they will lose practicing rights?

Medsafe did not give orders to the Medical Council advising that if medical practitioners prescribed ivermectin they would lose their prescribing rights. Medsafe provided information around safety concerns of the medicine and advice from other sources in relation to prescribing ivermectin for treatment of COVID-19. This information is publicly available on the Medsafe website here: www.medsafe.govt.nz/safety/Alerts/Ivermectin-covid19.htm.

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners states that the use of ivermectin for the treatment of COVID-19 is strongly not recommended. This information is publicly available at: www.rnzcgp.org.nz/Covid19/College_support/Ivermectin/Covid19/College_support/Ivermectin.aspx.

- Has New Zealand Government advised media to not report success of ivermectin in treating Covid 19, and preventing deaths?

Medsafe has not advised the media to not report success of ivermectin in treating COVID-19 and preventing deaths.

- Has New Zealand Government advised medsafe not to allow individual to import ivermectin for their own use when individual accepts the consequences?"

Medsafe and Customs work together at the border to examine packages believed to contain medicines. Ivermectin is a prescription medicine and cannot be imported by an individual unless authorised to do so. The Medicines Act 1981 does not confer on Medsafe any authority to grant permission for individuals to access prescription medicines for their personal use when the individual accepts responsibility. Information about this is available at: <https://www.medsafe.govt.nz/Consumers/MIET/ImportMedicines.asp>

Medsafe has not received any instructions to not allow individuals to import ivermectin for their own use when individuals accept the responsibilities.

I trust this information fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris James', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris James
Group Manager
Medsafe