**Riluzole**

There are two brands of riluzole available in Australia. Rilutek™ is manufactured by Sanofi and the generic version APO-Riluzole is made by Apotex. Riluzole appears to block the release of glutamate from nerve cells (neurones).

Riluzole is safe and effective for slowing disease progression to a modest degree in ALS (Miller and others 2009a). Riluzole 100 mg daily is reasonably safe and probably prolongs median survival by about two to three months in patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. (Miller and others 2012).

In Australia both brands of riluzole (Rilutek™ and APO-Riluzole) are available for eligible people at a subsidised price on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) under an authority prescription. Currently some hospital pharmacies may supply APO-Riluzole at a reduced price for people who are ineligible for the PBS.

**Miller and others 2012**

Adverse effects from riluzole are relatively minor and, for the most part, reversible after stopping the drug. The most frequent side effects are nausea and asthenia. Liver function becomes altered and requires monitoring.

**Miller and others 2009a**

Riluzole has a modest beneficial effect in slowing disease progression (prolonged survival of 2–3 months) based on 4 Class I trials. The number needed to treat to delay 1 death until after 12 months was 11.

**Chio and others 2009**

Riluzole may improve mortality rate by 23% and 15% at 6 and 12 months, respectively.

**National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence 2001**

Regular blood testing to monitor liver function (every month for three months, then every three months for a further nine months and annually thereafter) is recommended for people taking riluzole.