

Understanding NICE guidance

Information for people who use NHS services

Topotecan for the treatment of relapsed small-cell lung cancer

NICE 'technology appraisal guidance' advises on when and how drugs and other treatments should be used in the NHS.

This leaflet is about when **topotecan** should be used to treat people with relapsed small-cell lung cancer in the NHS in England and Wales. It explains guidance (advice) from NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence). It does not cover using topotecan to treat other types of cancer. It is written for people with relapsed small-cell lung cancer but it may also be useful for their families or carers or anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe small-cell lung cancer or the treatments in detail – a member of your healthcare team should discuss these with you. You can get more information from the organisations listed on the back page.



This may not be the only possible treatment for relapsed small-cell lung cancer. Your healthcare team should talk to you about whether it is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.

What has NICE said?

Oral topotecan is recommended as a possible treatment for people with relapsed small-cell lung cancer if:

- re-treatment with the previous treatment is not considered appropriate **and**
- there is a medical reason why they cannot take the combination of cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin and vincristine (CAV).

Intravenous topotecan is not recommended for people with relapsed small-cell lung cancer.

Healthcare professionals should not stop prescribing topotecan for people with relapsed small-cell lung cancer who were already taking it when the guidance was issued. These people should be able to carry on taking topotecan until they and their specialist decide that it is the right time to stop treatment.

Small-cell lung cancer

Cancer affecting the lungs is grouped into two main types depending on how it looks under the microscope: small-cell lung cancer and non-small-cell lung cancer.

Cancer that is described as relapsed is cancer that has returned after a previous treatment.

Topotecan

Topotecan (also known as Hycamtin) is an anticancer drug. It works by interfering with an enzyme that cancer cells need to grow, so topotecan stops the cancer from getting bigger and kills some cancer cells.

What does this mean for me?

When NICE recommends a treatment, the NHS must make sure it is available to those people it could help, normally within 3 months of the guidance being issued. So, if you have relapsed small-cell lung cancer, and your doctor thinks that **oral** topotecan is the right treatment for you, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS. Please see www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance if the treatment is not available.

If you have relapsed small-cell lung cancer and are already taking **oral** topotecan but don't meet the criteria for treatment, or are receiving **intravenous** topotecan, you should be able to continue taking it until you and your specialist decide it is the right time to stop.

More information

The organisations below can provide more information and support for people with relapsed small-cell lung cancer. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- British Lung Foundation, 0845 850 5020
www.lunguk.org
- CancerHelp UK (the patient information website of Cancer Research UK), 0808 800 4040
www.cancerhelp.org.uk
- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0808 808 0000
www.macmillan.org.uk
- The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, 0800 358 7200
www.roycastle.org

NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) may be a good place to find out more. Your local patient advice and liaison service (usually known as 'PALS') may also be able to give you more information and support. If you live in Wales you should speak to NHS Direct Wales for information on who to contact.

About NICE

NICE produces guidance (advice) for the NHS about preventing, diagnosing and treating medical conditions. The guidance is written by independent experts, including healthcare professionals and people representing patients and carers. They consider the evidence on the disease and treatments, the views of patients and carers and the experiences of doctors, and consider the costs involved. Staff working in the NHS are expected to follow this guidance.

To find out more about NICE, its work and how it reaches decisions, see www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance

This leaflet and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at www.nice.org.uk/TA184

*You can order printed copies of this leaflet from NICE publications (phone 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote reference N2025). The NICE website has a screen reader service called *Browsealoud*, which allows you to listen to our guidance. Click on the *Browsealoud* logo on the NICE website to use this service.*

We encourage NHS and voluntary organisations to use text from this leaflet in their own information about small-cell lung cancer.