

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

Adalimumab for the treatment of psoriatic arthritis

This leaflet is about when **adalimumab** should be used to treat people with psoriatic arthritis in the NHS in England and Wales. It explains guidance (advice) from NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence). It is written for people with psoriatic arthritis but it may also be useful for their families or carers or anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe psoriatic arthritis or the treatments in detail – a member of your healthcare team should discuss these with you. Some sources of further information and support are on page 4.



This may not be the only possible treatment for psoriatic arthritis. Your healthcare team should talk to you about whether it is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.

What has NICE said?

Adalimumab should be offered as an option for treating adults with active and progressive psoriatic arthritis when:

- the person has arthritis with three or more tender joints and three or more swollen joints, and
- at least two other disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs), given on their own or together, haven't worked.

Treatment with adalimumab should be started and supervised by a specialist physician who is experienced in diagnosing and treating psoriatic arthritis.

If the person's psoriatic arthritis has not shown a measured response at 12 weeks, their treatment with adalimumab should be stopped.

Psoriatic arthritis

Psoriatic arthritis is inflammation of the joints in people who also have the skin condition psoriasis.

In people with psoriasis, the process of skin renewal happens so quickly that new cells reach the skin surface faster than normal and build up with the dead cells. This causes raised red patches of skin covered with silvery scales – often described as 'plaques'.

In people with psoriatic arthritis, these plaques are associated with painful, swollen or stiff joints. Other parts of the body may also be affected. For example, sometimes inflammation also affects tendons.

Psoriatic arthritis is described as 'active' when the skin or joint symptoms of the condition occur. The condition is progressive, which means that it gets worse over time, but it is unpredictable and can flare up and settle down again – the reasons for this are unknown. Flare ups of the skin or joint symptoms do not necessarily occur at the same time. The severity of the symptoms can also vary from mild to severe.

Adalimumab

Adalimumab is a medicine that is used to treat psoriatic arthritis. It works by reducing the pain and swelling caused by the inflammatory protein TNF-alpha, which is believed to have a role in causing the symptoms of psoriatic arthritis.

What does this mean for me?

When NICE recommends a treatment, the NHS must ensure it is available to those people it could help, normally within 3 months of the guidance being issued. So, if you have active and progressive psoriatic arthritis, and your doctor thinks that adalimumab 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 you appear to be eligible for the treatment but it is not available.

More information

The organisations below can provide more information and support for people with psoriatic arthritis. Please note that NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- The Psoriasis Association, 0845 676 0076
www.psoriasis-association.org.uk
- Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Alliance, 0870 770 3212
www.papaa.org
- Skin Care Campaign, 020 7561 8248
www.skincarecampaign.org

NHS Direct online (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) may be a good starting point for finding out more. Your local Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) may also be able to give you further advice and support.

About NICE

NICE produces guidance (advice) for the NHS about preventing, diagnosing and treating different medical conditions. The guidance is written by independent experts including healthcare professionals and people representing patients and carers. They consider all the research on the disease or treatment, talk to people affected by it, 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/about guidance

This leaflet and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at www.nice.org.uk/TA125

You can order printed copies of this leaflet from the NHS Response Line (phone 0870 1555 455 and quote reference N1310).

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