

## Understanding NICE guidance

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Information for people who use NHS services

### Infliximab for subacute ulcerative colitis

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

This leaflet is about when **infliximab** should be used to treat people with ulcerative colitis in the NHS in England and Wales, when the condition would normally be managed without the person needing to stay in hospital overnight or have urgent surgery. It explains guidance (advice) from NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence). It is written for people with ulcerative colitis but it may also be useful for their families or carers or anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe ulcerative colitis 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 the back page.

*There are several possible treatments for ulcerative colitis. Your healthcare team should talk to you about the treatment options available.*

## What has NICE said?

Infliximab is not recommended for people with subacute, moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis.

Subacute ulcerative colitis is defined as ulcerative colitis that would normally be managed without needing to stay in hospital overnight or having urgent surgery.

## Ulcerative colitis

Ulcerative colitis is a condition in which the lining of the large intestine becomes inflamed. The most common symptom is bloody diarrhoea. Pain or discomfort in the abdomen and an urgent or frequent need to empty the bowel may also occur.

Ulcerative colitis is described as moderately active if more than four daily bowel movements are needed. People with severely active ulcerative colitis need more than six bowel movements a day, and have other symptoms such as a fast heart beat, fever and anaemia.

## Infliximab

Infliximab is a drug that targets a substance in the body (TNF alpha) and helps to prevent it causing inflammation. It is used to treat adults whose ulcerative colitis symptoms have not improved enough with other treatments, or who can't be given other treatments for medical reasons.

### What does this mean for me?

NICE looks at how well treatments work and also at how well they work in relation to how much they cost the NHS.

There was evidence that infliximab would not represent value for money for the NHS when used to treat people with moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis whose disease would normally be managed without needing to stay in hospital overnight or having urgent surgery.

This means that for the time being infliximab should not be prescribed routinely on the NHS. Your doctor should talk to you about other treatment options available to you.

## More information

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

- National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease (NACC),  
0845 130 2233, [www.nacc.org.uk](http://www.nacc.org.uk)

NHS Direct online ([www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://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/aboutguidance](http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance)*

*This leaflet and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at [www.nice.org.uk/TA140](http://www.nice.org.uk/TA140)*

*You can order printed copies of this leaflet from NICE publications (phone 0845 003 7783 or email [publications@nice.org.uk](mailto:publications@nice.org.uk) and quote reference N1560).*

*We encourage NHS and voluntary sector organisations to use text from this leaflet in their own information about ulcerative colitis.*