

Understanding NICE guidance

Information for people who use NHS services

Etanercept and efalizumab for the treatment of psoriasis

The European Medicines Agency (EMA), the European Union body which is responsible for monitoring the safety of medicines, has withdrawn the marketing authorisation for Merck Serono's psoriasis drug efalizumab (Raptiva). Therefore, NICE has withdrawn its guidance on the use of efalizumab for the treatment of adults with psoriasis.

The information in this leaflet is the original guidance developed in 2006. Please note that only the guidance on the use of etanercept for the treatment of adults with psoriasis now remains in force.

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

This leaflet is about when etanercept and efalizumab should be used to treat people with plaque psoriasis 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 plaque psoriasis but it may also be useful for their families or carers or anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe plaque psoriasis 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.

What has NICE said about etanercept and efalizumab?

Etanercept should be offered as an option for treating adults with severe plaque psoriasis when:

- other treatments haven't worked (for example, drugs given by injection or orally, that is, by mouth), or
- these other treatments cause a reaction which means that the person shouldn't continue taking them, or
- the person has another condition or uses another medicine that means they should not take these other treatments.

If the person's psoriasis has not shown a measured response to etanercept after 12 weeks, the treatment should be stopped.

Efalizumab should be offered as an option for treating adults with severe plaque psoriasis if:

- the person meets the criteria in the three bullets above, and
- etanercept hasn't worked, or
- etanercept causes a reaction which means that the person shouldn't continue taking it, or
- the person has a condition or takes another medicine that means they should not take etanercept.

Further treatment with efalizumab is not recommended unless the person's psoriasis has shown a measured response at 12 weeks.

Psoriasis

Psoriasis is a skin disease in which the normal processes of skin cell replacement are speeded up.

Under normal circumstances new skin cells rise to the surface of the skin, and the dead ones at the surface drop off. In people with psoriasis this happens so quickly that the new skin cells get to the surface before the old ones have died and dropped off. This causes raised red patches of skin covered with silvery scales which are known as 'plaques'.

Psoriasis does get worse over time, but it can be unpredictable with symptoms ranging from mild to severe.

Etanercept and efalizumab

Etanercept and efalizumab are two medicines used to treat psoriasis. Etanercept and efalizumab can help to reduce the skin changes in the body that are the main cause of plaque psoriasis.

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 plaque psoriasis, and your doctor thinks that etanercept or efalizumab 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.

These may not be the only possible treatments for psoriasis. Your healthcare team should talk to you about whether they are suitable for you and about other treatment options available.

More information about psoriasis

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

- The Psoriasis Association, 08456 760 076,
www.psoriasis-association.org.uk
- Skin Care Campaign,
www.skincarecampaign.org
- Psoriatic Arthropathy Alliance, 0870 7703212,
www.thepaa.org

NHS Direct online (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) may also 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 advice (guidance) 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

This leaflet and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at www.nice.org.uk/ITA103

You can order printed copies of this leaflet from NICE publications (phone 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote reference N1091).

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