

Understanding NICE guidance

Information for people who use NHS services

Telbivudine for chronic hepatitis B

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

This leaflet is about when **telbivudine** should be used to treat people with chronic hepatitis B 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 telbivudine to treat people who also have hepatitis C, hepatitis D or HIV. It is written for people with chronic hepatitis B but it may also be useful for their families or carers or anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe chronic hepatitis B 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 chronic hepatitis B. Your healthcare team should talk to you about the treatment options available.

What has NICE said?

Telbivudine is not recommended for people with chronic hepatitis B.

Healthcare professionals should not stop prescribing telbivudine for people who were already taking it when the guidance was issued.

These patients should be able to carry on taking telbivudine until they and their healthcare professionals decide that it is the right time to stop treatment.

Chronic hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a disease that affects the liver. It is caused by the hepatitis B virus. If the infection lasts for more than 6 months, it is called chronic hepatitis B. Many people who have chronic hepatitis B feel well much of the time, but are much more likely than someone without the disease to develop serious liver problems such as cirrhosis and cancer.

Telbivudine

Telbivudine is a drug that stops the hepatitis B virus reproducing. It is taken as a tablet once a day.

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 is not enough reliable evidence that telbivudine represents value for money for the NHS.

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

If you are already taking telbivudine for chronic hepatitis B, you should be able to continue taking it until you and your healthcare professionals decide it is the right time to stop.

More information

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

- British Liver Trust, 0800 652 7330
www.britishlivertrust.org.uk
- Hepatitis B Foundation UK, 01227 738 279
www.hepb.org.uk

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/aboutguidance

This leaflet and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at www.nice.org.uk/TA154

You can order printed copies of this leaflet from NICE publications (phone 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote reference N1663).

We encourage NHS and voluntary sector organisations to use text from this leaflet in their own information about chronic hepatitis B.