

Understanding NICE guidance

Information for people who use NHS services

Infliximab for acute 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 flares suddenly. 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.



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

What has NICE said?

Infliximab is recommended as a possible treatment for people with acute, severely active ulcerative colitis only if:

- ciclosporin is considered inappropriate for them, **or**
- they are taking part in a research study (clinical trial).

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.

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. Ulcerative colitis is described as 'acute' when it flares suddenly.

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?

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 severely active ulcerative colitis and ciclosporin is considered inappropriate for you, and your healthcare professional thinks that infliximab 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.

If ciclosporin is considered appropriate for you, you should not be offered infliximab routinely on the NHS unless you have been asked to take part in a research study (clinical trial). Your healthcare professional should talk to you about other treatment options available to you.

More information

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

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

NHS Choices (www.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/TA163

You can order printed copies of this leaflet from NICE publications (phone 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote reference N1754).

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