

## Understanding NICE guidance

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Information for people who use NHS services

# Sunitinib for the first-line treatment of advanced and/or metastatic renal cell carcinoma

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

This leaflet is about when **sunitinib** should be used to treat people with advanced and/or metastatic renal cell carcinoma 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 advanced and/or metastatic renal cell carcinoma but it may also be useful for their families or carers or anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe advanced and metastatic renal cell carcinoma or the treatments in detail – your specialist should discuss these with you. You can get more information from the organisations listed on the back page.

*This may not be the only possible treatment for advanced and/or metastatic renal cell carcinoma. Your specialist should talk to you about whether it is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.*

## What has NICE said?

Sunitinib is recommended as a possible first drug treatment for people with advanced and/or metastatic renal cell carcinoma if:

- immunotherapy (for example, interferon alfa) would be suitable for them **and**
- they are mobile and can do light housework or office work.

When assessing people with disabilities, healthcare professionals should bear in mind that a person's disability might also affect their level of physical activity. They should make adjustments for this.

Specialists should not stop prescribing sunitinib for people who were already taking it when the guidance was issued. These people should be able to carry on taking sunitinib until they and their specialist decide that it is the right time to stop treatment.

## Renal cell carcinoma

Renal cell carcinoma is a kidney cancer (tumour) that starts in cells lining the small tubes that help to make urine. In advanced disease, the tumour has spread inside the kidney, but may or may not have spread to nearby lymph glands. In metastatic renal cell carcinoma, the tumour has spread beyond the lymph glands to other parts of the body.

## Sunitinib

Sunitinib is a drug that works by binding to cancer cells and slowing down the growth of tumours.

### What does this mean for me?

When NICE recommends a treatment, the NHS must make sure it is available to those people it could help, normally within 3 months of the guidance being issued. So, if you have advanced and/or metastatic renal cell carcinoma, immunotherapy (for example, interferon alfa) would be suitable for you, you are mobile and can do light housework or office work, and your specialist thinks that sunitinib is the right treatment for you, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS. If you have a disability that affects your level of physical activity your healthcare professional should take this into account when considering sunitinib treatment.

Please see [www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance](http://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 advanced and/or metastatic renal cell carcinoma. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- Kidney Cancer UK, 01889 565801  
[www.kcuk.org](http://www.kcuk.org)
- Kidney Research UK, 0845 300 1499  
[www.kidneyresearchuk.org](http://www.kidneyresearchuk.org)
- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0808 800 1234  
[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)
- National Kidney Federation, 0845 601 0209  
[www.kidney.org.uk](http://www.kidney.org.uk)
- Rarer Cancers Forum, 01227 738279  
[www.rarercancers.org.uk](http://www.rarercancers.org.uk)

NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) may be a good place to find out more. Your local patient advice and liaison service (usually known as 'PALS') may also be able to give you more information and support.

## About NICE

NICE produces guidance (advice) for the NHS about preventing, diagnosing and treating medical conditions. The guidance is written by independent experts, including healthcare professionals and people representing patients and carers. They consider the evidence on the disease and treatments, the views of patients and carers and the experiences of doctors, 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/TA169](http://www.nice.org.uk/TA169)*

*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 N1840).*

*We encourage NHS and voluntary organisations to use text from this leaflet in their own information about advanced and metastatic renal cell carcinoma.*