

Imatinib for unresectable and/or metastatic gastrointestinal stromal tumours (GISTs)

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

This leaflet is about when increased doses of **imatinib** should be used to treat people with gastrointestinal stromal tumours (also known as GISTs) that cannot be removed by surgery (unresectable) or that have spread to other parts of the body (metastatic) after treatment with imatinib at a dose of 400 mg a day 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 GISTs but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

The information in this leaflet should be read together with the following leaflet.

- 'Imatinib for gastrointestinal stromal tumours' – TA86, available from www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA86

This leaflet does not describe GISTs or the treatments in detail – a member of your healthcare team should discuss these with you. You can get more information from the organisations listed on page 4.



There are several possible treatments for unresectable and/or metastatic GISTs. Your healthcare team should talk to you about the treatment options available.

What has NICE said?

NICE does not recommend imatinib at a dose of 600 or 800 mg a day for people with unresectable and/or metastatic GISTs whose disease has got worse after treatment with imatinib at a dose of 400 mg a day.

Why has NICE said this?

NICE looks at how well treatments work, and also at how well they work in relation to how much they cost the NHS. NICE applies special considerations to treatments that can extend the lives of people who are nearing the end of their life. There is not enough evidence from clinical trials to say how well an increased dose of imatinib works, or whether it works well enough to justify its cost, so NICE did not recommend it.

Unresectable and/or metastatic GISTs

GISTs are rare tumours found in the digestive system, most commonly in the stomach. Many of these tumours are non-cancerous and cause few symptoms. If they become malignant (cancerous) and are confined to one area of the stomach or bowel, they can often be removed surgically. However, some malignant GISTs can grow too large to be removed by surgery (unresectable), and they may also spread to other parts of the body (metastatic).

Imatinib

Imatinib (also known as Glivec) is a drug that stops tumour cells growing and multiplying. This slows down or stops the spread of the tumour. Imatinib is taken as a tablet.

What does this mean for me?

If you are already taking imatinib at a dose of 600 or 800 mg a day for unresectable and/or metastatic GISTs, you should be able to continue taking it until you and your healthcare professional decide it is the right time to stop.

More information

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

- GIST Support UK, 0300 400 0000
www.gistsupport.co.uk
- Rarer Cancers Foundation, 0800 434 6476
www.rarercancers.org.uk
- Sarcoma UK, 020 7250 8271
www.sarcoma-uk.org

NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) may be a good place to find out more. Your local patient advice and liaison service (usually known as 'PALS') may be able to give you more information and support. If you live in Wales you should speak to NHS Direct Wales for information on who to contact.

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, nurses and other healthcare professionals, 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/guidance/TA209

*You can order printed copies of this leaflet from NICE publications (phone 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote reference N2366). The NICE website has a screen reader service called *Browsealoud*, which allows you to listen to our guidance. Click on the *Browsealoud* logo on the NICE website to use this service.*

We encourage NHS and voluntary organisations to use text from this leaflet in their own information about unresectable and/or metastatic GISTs.

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ISBN 978-1-84936-418-8

N2366 POD 1P NOV 10

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