

Understanding NICE guidance

Information for people who use NHS services

Bevacizumab in combination with a taxane as first treatment for metastatic breast cancer

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

This leaflet is about when **bevacizumab** in combination with a type of chemotherapy drug called a taxane should be used as the first treatment for people with metastatic breast cancer 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 bevacizumab to treat other types of cancer or using it to treat metastatic breast cancer after other drugs have been tried. It is written for people with metastatic breast cancer but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe metastatic breast cancer 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 the back page.



There are several possible treatments for metastatic breast cancer. Your healthcare team should talk to you about the treatment options available.

What has NICE said?

NICE does not recommend bevacizumab in combination with a taxane as first treatment for people with metastatic breast cancer.

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. Bevacizumab in combination with a taxane does not provide enough benefit to patients to justify its high cost, and did not qualify for special consideration, so NICE did not recommend it.

Metastatic breast cancer

Breast cancer that has spread to other parts of the body is known as metastatic breast cancer. First treatment of metastatic breast cancer means that you have not had any treatment for metastatic cancer, but you may have had other treatment for breast cancer before it spread.

Bevacizumab

Bevacizumab is an anticancer drug that stops new blood vessels forming in a tumour. It can be given in combination with a type of chemotherapy drug called a taxane (usually using a drug called paclitaxel).

What does this mean for me?

Bevacizumab in combination with a taxane should not normally be prescribed on the NHS as first treatment for metastatic breast cancer. Your doctor should talk to you about other treatment options available to you.

If you are already taking bevacizumab in combination with a taxane for metastatic breast cancer, 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 metastatic breast cancer. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- Breakthrough Breast Cancer, 08080 100 200
www.breakthrough.org.uk
- Breast Cancer Care, 0808 800 6000
www.breastcancercare.org.uk
- CancerHelp UK, 0808 800 4040
www.cancerhelp.org.uk
- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0808 808 0000
www.macmillan.org.uk

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/TA214

You can order printed copies of this leaflet from NICE publications (phone 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote reference N2424). 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 metastatic breast cancer.