

Donepezil, galantamine, rivastigmine and memantine for Alzheimer's disease

Information for the public

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What has NICE said?

Donepezil, galantamine, rivastigmine and memantine are recommended as possible treatments for some people with Alzheimer's disease.

You should be able to have donepezil, galantamine or rivastigmine if you have mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. You should be able to have memantine if you have:

- moderate Alzheimer's disease and cannot take donepezil, galantamine or rivastigmine
or
- severe Alzheimer's disease.

When assessing the severity of your Alzheimer's disease and the treatment needed, healthcare professionals should take into account any disabilities or difficulties in

communicating that you might have.

Healthcare professionals should only prescribe these medicines on the advice of a clinician who has experience with Alzheimer's disease. This may be a doctor (such as a psychiatrist or your GP) or other healthcare professional (such as a nurse with special training).

What does this mean for me?

If you have Alzheimer's disease, and your doctor thinks that donepezil, galantamine, rivastigmine or memantine is the right treatment, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS.

Donepezil, galantamine, rivastigmine and memantine should have been available on the NHS since 2011.

Why has NICE said this?

NICE looks at how well treatments work in relation to how much they cost compared with other treatments available on the NHS.

NICE recommended donepezil, galantamine, rivastigmine and memantine for the people described above because the benefits they provided justified their costs.

The condition and the treatments

Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia. It affects the brain and causes problems with memory, thinking and behaviour. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive condition, which means that it gets worse over time as more parts of the brain are affected.

Mild Alzheimer's disease

Symptoms that can give a person with dementia some difficulty, including some memory loss and feelings of disorientation, and finding it hard to cope with complex problems.

Moderate Alzheimer's disease

Symptoms that can give a person with dementia significant difficulty, including severe memory loss and feelings of disorientation, and finding it very hard to cope with everyday problems.

Severe Alzheimer's disease

Symptoms that can give a person with dementia great difficulty, including very severe memory loss and feelings of disorientation, and being unable to communicate, make decisions or do simple things (such as eating or walking).

[NHS Choices](#) may be a good place to find out more.

Donepezil, galantamine, rivastigmine and memantine

Donepezil, galantamine, rivastigmine and memantine are medicines that help with the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, but do not stop it from getting worse over time.

Donepezil, galantamine and rivastigmine prevent a chemical called acetylcholine from being broken down in the body. Acetylcholine is needed for the nerve cells in the brain to work properly.

Memantine reduces the amount of a chemical called glutamate in the brain. High levels of glutamate damage nerve cells in the brain and stop them working properly.

Sources of advice and support

- [Alzheimer's Society](#), 0300 222 1122

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Accreditation

