

Abiraterone for metastatic prostate cancer after treatment to reduce testosterone and docetaxel chemotherapy

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

This document is about when **abiraterone** should be used in the NHS in England and Wales to treat adults with metastatic prostate cancer who have already had treatment to reduce testosterone and have had docetaxel chemotherapy. It explains guidance (advice) from NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence). It is written for adults with metastatic prostate 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 prostate cancer or the treatments in detail – your specialist should discuss these with you. You can get more information from the organisations listed on page 4.

Your specialist should talk to you about whether abiraterone is suitable for you.

What has NICE said?

NICE recommends abiraterone as a possible treatment for some adults with metastatic prostate cancer who have already had treatment to reduce testosterone and have had docetaxel chemotherapy (see below).

Who can have abiraterone?

You should be able to have abiraterone if you've had docetaxel chemotherapy but your disease has stopped responding to treatment.

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. NICE recommended abiraterone because it works better than other treatments available on the NHS. Although it also costs more than other treatments, this was justified by the benefits it provided when the special considerations were applied.

Metastatic prostate cancer

Prostate cancer occurs when cells in the prostate gland grow in an uncontrolled way. When the cancer has spread to another part of the body, usually the bones, it is called advanced or metastatic prostate cancer.

Usually the hormone testosterone makes the cancer grow faster so drugs are given that make the body produce less testosterone or react

to it in a different way. Sometimes the part of the testicle which produces testosterone is removed. After a time, these treatments may stop working. When this happens the cancer is known as castration resistant or hormone refractory. Abiraterone is a possible treatment when treatments to reduce testosterone are no longer working and the cancer is no longer responding to docetaxel chemotherapy.

Abiraterone

Abiraterone (Zytiga) is an anti-cancer drug that blocks the production of testosterone and so slows the growth of cancer cells. It is taken as a tablet and is given with another drug called prednisone or prednisolone.

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 metastatic prostate cancer and you've already had treatment to reduce testosterone and docetaxel chemotherapy, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS if you and your doctor think that abiraterone is the right treatment for you (see 'What has NICE said?' on page 2). Please see www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance if you think you are eligible for the treatment but it is not available.

More information

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

- CancerHelp UK, 0808 800 4040, www.cancerhelp.org.uk (the patient information website of Cancer Research UK)
- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0808 808 0000, www.macmillan.org.uk
- Prostate Action, 020 8788 7720, www.prostateaction.org.uk
- Prostate Cancer Charity, 0845 300 8383, www.prostate-cancer.org.uk
- Prostate Cancer Support Federation, 0845 601 0766, www.prostatecancerfederation.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 document and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA259

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 document in their own information about metastatic prostate cancer.

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