

Ipilimumab for previously treated advanced melanoma

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

This document is about when **ipilimumab** should be used to treat people with previously treated advanced melanoma 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 melanoma but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe advanced melanoma 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.

This may not be the only possible treatment for previously treated advanced (unresectable or metastatic) melanoma. Your healthcare team should talk to you about whether it is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.

What has NICE said?

NICE recommends ipilimumab as a possible treatment for people with previously treated advanced (unresectable or metastatic) melanoma.

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 ipilimumab 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.

Advanced melanoma

Melanoma is a form of skin cancer. Advanced melanoma is when the cancer can't be completely removed by surgery (unresectable) or has spread to other parts of the body (metastatic).

Ipilimumab

Ipilimumab (also known as Yervoy) is a drug given by injection, which helps the body's immune system to recognise and destroy melanoma cells.

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 previously treated advanced (unresectable or metastatic) melanoma, and you and your doctor think that ipilimumab is the right treatment for you (see 'What has NICE said?' on page 2), you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS. 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 advanced melanoma. 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
- Factor 50, 07930 375 360
www.factor50.org.uk
- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0808 808 0000
www.macmillan.org.uk
- Skcin - Karen Clifford Skin Cancer Charity
<http://www.skcin.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 document and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA268

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 advanced (unresectable or metastatic) melanoma.

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