

## **Ranibizumab for diabetic macular oedema**

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

This document is about when ranibizumab should be used to treat people with diabetic macular oedema 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 diabetic macular oedema but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe diabetic macular oedema 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 3.

*This may not be the only possible treatment for diabetic macular oedema. 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 ranibizumab as a possible treatment for problems with sight due to diabetic macular oedema in some people (see below).

### Who can have ranibizumab?

You should be able to have ranibizumab if the central retina (area in the middle of the back of your affected eye) is above a certain thickness (400 micrometres or more) when treatment is started.

### 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 recommended ranibizumab because it works better than other treatments available on the NHS, and the benefit to patients justifies the cost.

## Diabetic macular oedema

Diabetic macular oedema affects sight in people with diabetes. The macula is the central part of the retina at the back of the eye. In diabetic macular oedema, there is abnormal growth of new blood vessels in the macula. These vessels leak fluid, causing the macula to swell and leading to problems with sight.

## Ranibizumab

Ranibizumab (also known as Lucentis) works by blocking a substance called vascular endothelial growth factor (or VEGF for short) that, in people with diabetic macular oedema, causes the abnormal growth of

new blood vessels in the eye. Ranibizumab is given by injection into the eye.

### 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 diabetic macular oedema, and you and your doctor think that ranibizumab 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](http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance) if you think you are eligible for the treatment but it is not available.

If you are not eligible for treatment as described in 'What has NICE said' on page 2, you should be able to continue taking ranibizumab until you and your doctor decide it is the right time to stop.

### More information

The organisations below can provide more information and support for people with visual impairment due to diabetic macular oedema. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations

- Diabetes UK, 0845 120 2960  
[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)
- Fight for Sight, 020 7264 3900  
[www.fightforsight.org.uk](http://www.fightforsight.org.uk)
- Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, 020 7713 2030  
[www.jdrf.org.uk](http://www.jdrf.org.uk)

- Macular Society - support throughout central vision, 0300 3030 111  
[www.macularsociety.org](http://www.macularsociety.org)
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), 0303 123 9999  
[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) may be a good place to find out more. 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 condition 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](http://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/TA274](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA274)*

*The NICE website has a screen reader service called *Browsealoud*, which allows you to listen to our guidance. Click on [Accessibility](#) at the bottom of the NICE homepage to use this service.*

*We encourage NHS and voluntary organisations to use text from this document in their own information about diabetic macular oedema.*

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