

Information for the public

Ranibizumab for macular oedema caused by retinal vein occlusion

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 in the NHS in England and Wales to treat people with macular oedema caused by retinal vein occlusion. It explains guidance (advice) from NICE (the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence). It is written for people with macular oedema caused by retinal vein occlusion but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe macular oedema caused by retinal vein occlusion 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 macular oedema caused by retinal vein occlusion. 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 some people who have sight problems because of macular oedema caused by retinal vein occlusion (see below).

Who can have ranibizumab?

You should be able to have ranibizumab if:

- you have **central** retinal vein occlusion **or**
- you have **branch** retinal vein occlusion and you have had laser treatment (grid laser photocoagulation) that hasn't worked or it is not suitable for you because of the amount of bleeding in your eye.

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 when grid laser photocoagulation hasn't worked or is not suitable because it works better than other treatments available on the NHS, and the benefit to patients justifies the cost.

Macular oedema caused by retinal vein occlusion

The macula is the central part of the retina at the back of the eye. When a retinal vein becomes blocked (retinal vein occlusion) blood can leak into the macula causing it to swell. This is known as macular oedema and can affect sight. There are 2 types of blockage depending on which part of the vein is blocked: central or branch retinal vein occlusion.

Current standard treatment for branch retinal vein occlusion is laser treatment. Laser treatment is not suitable for people with central retinal vein occlusion.

Ranibizumab

Ranibizumab (also known as Lucentis) is given by injection into the eye.

It works by blocking a substance called vascular endothelial growth factor (or VEGF for short). This reduces the swelling in the veins in the eye and either improves sight or stops it getting worse.

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 sight problems because of macular oedema that has been caused by retinal vein occlusion, 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 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 macular oedema. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- Fight for Sight, 020 7264 3900
www.fightforsight.org.uk
- Macular Society – support throughout central vision loss, 0300 3030 111
www.macularsociety.org
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), 0303 123 9999 or
helpline@rnib.org.uk
www.rnib.org.uk

NHS Choices (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 provides national guidance and advice to improve health and social care. 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/TA283

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 retinal vein occlusion and macular oedema.

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