

# Rifaximin for hepatic encephalopathy

Information for the public  
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[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

## What has NICE said?

Rifaximin (Targaxan) is recommended for preventing episodes of hepatic encephalopathy in people aged 18 years or older.

## What does this mean for me?

If you have had an episode of hepatic encephalopathy, and your doctor thinks that rifaximin is the right treatment, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS.

Rifaximin should be available on the NHS within 3 months of the guidance being issued.

## Why has NICE said this?

Rifaximin was recommended because the benefits to patients justify its cost.

NICE looks at how well treatments work in relation to how much they cost compared with

other treatments available on the NHS.

## The condition and the treatment

Hepatic encephalopathy is a brain disorder that is associated with liver disease. Sometimes, when a person's liver stops working properly, toxins can build up in the bloodstream. These toxins may cause the brain to malfunction (known as encephalopathy), leading to changes in personality and behaviour, and muscle problems.

Rifaximin (Targaxan) is a drug that is thought to lower the body's production of ammonia, one of the toxins that may cause hepatic encephalopathy.

## Sources of advice and support

- British Liver Trust, 01452 481320, [www.britishlivertrust.org.uk](http://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk)
- Liver4Life, 0800 0743494, [www.liver4life.org.uk](http://www.liver4life.org.uk)

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## Accreditation

