

# Belimumab for treating active autoantibody-positive systemic lupus erythematosus

Information for the public

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[nice.org.uk](http://nice.org.uk)

## What has NICE said?

Belimumab (Benlysta) is recommended as a possible additional treatment for adults with active autoantibody-positive systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) if all the following apply:

- Their disease is active even with usual treatment, they have a score of 10 or more points on the Safety of Estrogen in Lupus National Assessment – Systemic Lupus Erythematosus Disease Activity Index [SELENA-SLEDAI], and have blood tests showing disease.
- The SELENA-SLEDAI score improves by 4 or more points after having belimumab for 24 weeks.
- The conditions for data collection, monitoring, patient eligibility, consent and ongoing treatment in the guidance are met.

## What does this mean for me?

If you have active autoantibody-positive SLE, and your doctor thinks that belimumab is the right treatment, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS, according to the conditions in the guidance. These include collecting information on how the drug affects you and your condition. Your doctor should be able to give you more information about this.

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

If you are not eligible for treatment as described above, you should be able to continue taking belimumab until you and your doctor decide it is the right time to stop.

### The condition and the treatment

SLE is a condition in which the immune system, which normally fights infection, goes wrong and starts to attack itself. A type of white blood cell, a B-cell, produces antibodies that attack the body's own tissues, causing inflammation. The inflammation can damage the skin, joints and internal organs.

Belimumab helps to reduce inflammation and damage by reducing the number of B-cells in the body. It is given as an infusion into a person's vein over several hours. Belimumab is given with other treatments for systemic lupus erythematosus.

[NHS Choices](#) may be a good place to find out more.

These organisations can give you advice and support:

- [Lupus UK](#), 01708 731251
- [National Kidney Federation](#), 0845 601 0209
- [Kidney Research UK](#), 0300 303 1100
- [Arthritis Research UK](#), 0300 790 0400

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## Accreditation

