

## **Fulvestrant for locally advanced or metastatic breast cancer**

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

This leaflet is about when **fulvestrant** should be used to treat women with locally advanced or metastatic breast cancer 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 women with locally advanced or metastatic breast cancer but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe locally advanced or metastatic breast cancer or the treatments in detail – your specialist should discuss these with you. You can get more information from the organisations listed on page 3.

*There are several possible treatments for breast cancer. Your healthcare team should talk to you about the treatment options available.*

### What has NICE said?

NICE does not recommend fulvestrant instead of aromatase inhibitor drugs for postmenopausal women with locally advanced or metastatic breast cancer when the cancer:

- depends on oestrogen for growth **and**
- has returned or worsened after anti-oestrogen drugs.

Aromatase inhibitors and anti-oestrogens are types of drug used to treat breast cancer.

### 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. It was not clear from the evidence whether fulvestrant works as well as other treatments available on the NHS. It was also uncertain whether fulvestrant provides enough benefit to patients to justify its high cost, so NICE did not recommend it.

## Locally advanced or metastatic breast cancer

Breast cancer that is locally advanced has spread to the tissues surrounding the breast. Metastatic breast cancer has spread to other parts of the body.

## Fulvestrant

Fulvestrant is a drug used to treat locally advanced or metastatic breast cancer that depends on oestrogen for growth in postmenopausal women. It works by attaching itself to a molecule involved in cancer cell growth and stopping the cancer from growing.

## What does this mean for me?

Fulvestrant should not normally be prescribed on the NHS. Your doctor should talk to you about other treatment options available to you.

NICE will decide whether to review this guidance in August 2014.

If you are already taking fulvestrant for locally advanced or metastatic breast cancer, you should be able to continue taking it until you and your specialist decide it is the right time to stop.

## More information

The organisations below can provide more information and support for people with breast cancer. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- Breakthrough Breast Cancer, 08080 100200  
[www.breakthrough.org.uk](http://www.breakthrough.org.uk)
- Breast Cancer Care, 0808 800 600  
[www.breastcancercare.org.uk](http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk)
- CancerHelp UK – the patient information website of Cancer Research UK, 0808 800 4040  
<http://cancerhelp.cancerresearchuk.org>
- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0808 808 0000  
[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://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](http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance)*

*This leaflet and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at [www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA239](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA239)*

*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 leaflet in their own information about breast cancer.*

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ISBN 978-1-84936-751-6

Dec 11

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