

Peginterferon alfa and ribavirin for chronic hepatitis C in children and young people

Information for the public

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What has NICE said?

Peginterferon alfa with ribavirin is recommended as a possible treatment for children and young people with chronic hepatitis C.

What does this mean?

If your (or your child's) doctor thinks that peginterferon alfa with ribavirin is the right treatment, you (or your child) should be able to have the treatment on the NHS.

Peginterferon alfa with ribavirin should be available on the NHS within 3 months of the guidance being issued.

Why has NICE said this?

Peginterferon alfa with ribavirin was recommended because the benefit to patients compared with standard treatment justifies the 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 treatments

Hepatitis C is a disease of the liver that is caused by the hepatitis C virus. Some people who are infected with the hepatitis C virus recover quickly, but most people develop a long-lasting infection; this is called chronic hepatitis C. People who have chronic hepatitis C may feel well for many years, but the virus can make them ill and cause damage to their liver later.

Peginterferon alfa is a drug used to treat the hepatitis C virus. There are 2 types: peginterferon alfa-2a and peginterferon alfa-2b. Peginterferon alfa is usually taken with another drug called ribavirin.

NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) may be a good place to find out more.

Sources of advice and support

- British Liver Trust, 0800 652 7330, www.britishlivertrust.org.uk
- Children's Liver Disease Foundation, 0121 212 3839, www.childliverdisease.org
- Haemophilia Society, 0800 018 6068, www.haemophilia.org.uk
- Hepatitis C Trust, 0845 223 4424, www.hepctrust.org.uk
- South Asian Health Foundation, 020 331 30677, www.sahf.org.uk

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Accreditation

