

New treatment guidance issued by NICE

NHS

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

In July, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued guidance for the use of the targeted biological therapies, etanercept (Enbrel) and efalizumab (Raptiva), to treat adult patients with severe plaque psoriasis, and the use of etanercept (Enbrel) and infliximab (Remicade) to treat adult patients with psoriatic arthritis.

What has NICE said about etanercept and efalizumab for psoriasis?

Etanercept should be offered as an option for treating adults with severe plaque psoriasis when:

- other treatments haven't worked (for example, drugs given by injection or orally, that is, by mouth), or
- these other treatments cause a reaction which means that the person shouldn't continue taking them, or
- the person has another condition or uses another medicine that means they should not take these other treatments.

If the person's psoriasis has not shown a measured response to etanercept after 12 weeks, the treatment should be stopped.

Efalizumab should be offered as an option for treating adults with severe plaque psoriasis if:

- the person meets the criteria in the three bullets above, and
- etanercept hasn't worked, or
- etanercept causes a reaction which means that the person shouldn't continue taking it, or
- the person has a condition or takes another medicine that means they should not take etanercept.

Further treatment with efalizumab is not recommended unless the person's psoriasis has shown a measured response at 12 weeks.

What has NICE said about etanercept and infliximab for psoriatic arthritis?

Etanercept should be offered as an option for treating adults with psoriatic arthritis when:

- the person has arthritis with three or more tender joints and three or more swollen joints
- at least two other disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs), given on their own or together, haven't worked.

Infliximab should be offered as an option for treating adults with psoriatic arthritis if:

- the person meets the criteria in the two bullets above, and
- etanercept causes a reaction which means that the person shouldn't continue taking it, or
- the person has a condition or is taking another medicine that means they should not take etanercept, or
- the person has major difficulty injecting themselves.

If the person's psoriatic arthritis has not shown a measured response at 12 weeks, their treatment with etanercept or infliximab should be stopped.

New Single Technology Appraisals (STA) announced

Following the above published guidance NICE has announced Single Technology Appraisals (STA) for adalimumab (Humira) and leflunomide (Arava) for psoriatic arthritis and infliximab (Remicade) for psoriasis. This new process is designed specifically to appraise single technologies, with limited indications. The process is suitable for all single technology appraisals, including new technologies, new indications for existing technologies and reviews of existing guidance. However, the decision as to which technologies use the process will be made at the topic selection stage. Key stages of the existing appraisal process have been adapted to reflect the requirements and reduced complexity of a single technology appraisal.

Copies of the guidance, appraisals and single technology appraisals including documents for patients, carers and the public are available to view or download from the **NICE** website: www.nice.org.uk

NHS Direct online (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) may also be a good starting point for finding out more. Your local Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) may also be able to give you further advice and support.

Skin'n'Bones Connection

About NICE

NICE produces advice (guidance) for the NHS about preventing, diagnosing and treating different medical conditions. The guidance is written by independent experts including healthcare professionals and people representing patients and carers. They consider

all the research on the disease or treatment, talk to people affected by it, 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

What does this mean for me?

When NICE recommends a treatment, the NHS must ensure it is available to those people it could help, normally within 3 months of the guidance being issued. So, if you have severe psoriatic arthritis or psoriasis and your doctor thinks that etanercept, infliximab or efalizumab is the right treatment for you, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS. Please see www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance if you appear to be eligible for the treatment but it is not available.