

## Understanding NICE guidance

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Information for people who use NHS services

# Docetaxel for the treatment of hormone-refractory metastatic prostate 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 docetaxel should be used to treat men with hormone-refractory metastatic prostate 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 men with hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer but it may also be useful for their families or carers or anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer or the treatments in detail – a member of your healthcare team should discuss these with you. Some sources of further information and support are on page 3.

## What has NICE said about docetaxel for hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer?

Docetaxel is recommended as a possible treatment for men with hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer.

- It should be given only if the man is well enough to care for himself with occasional assistance.
- Treatment should be stopped at the end of a planned course of up to 10 cycles (or 'rounds') of docetaxel.
- The treatment should be stopped early if the man experiences serious side effects, or if the disease is getting worse.

NICE does not recommend using docetaxel again if the disease comes back after the first course of treatment has finished.

*This may not be the only possible treatment for hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer. Your healthcare team should talk to you about whether it is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.*

## Hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer

The prostate gland is just below the bladder in men. Prostate cancer occurs when normal cells in the prostate change and grow in an uncontrolled way. When prostate cancer has spread to another part of the body, usually the bones, it is called advanced or metastatic prostate cancer.

In most men with cancer of the prostate, the hormone testosterone makes the cancer grow faster. So prostate cancer can be treated with drugs that make the body produce less testosterone, or react to it in a different way. After a time, treatment may stop working – this is known as 'hormone-refractory' cancer.

## Docetaxel

Docetaxel is a drug used in chemotherapy for men with hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer. It is given with another drug called prednisolone.

A treatment cycle usually lasts 3 weeks. The man is given docetaxel once in each cycle and takes prednisolone tablets each day.

### 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 hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer, and your doctor thinks that docetaxel is the right treatment for you, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS. Please see [www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance](http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance) if you appear to be eligible for the treatment but it is not available.

## More information about hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer

The organisations below can provide more information and support for people with hormone-refractory metastatic prostate cancer. Please note that NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- Cancerbackup, telephone 0808 800 1234, [www.cancerbackup.org.uk](http://www.cancerbackup.org.uk)
- PSA Prostate Cancer Support Association, telephone 0845 601 0766, [www.prostatecancersupport.info](http://www.prostatecancersupport.info)
- The Prostate Cancer Charity, telephone 0845 300 8383, [www.prostate-cancer.org.uk](http://www.prostate-cancer.org.uk)
- Tenovus Cancer Information Centre, telephone 0808 808 1010, [www.tenovus.com](http://www.tenovus.com)
- Macmillan Cancer Voices, telephone 020 7091 2007, [www.macmillan.org.uk/cancervoices](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancervoices)

NHS Direct online ([www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://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.

## 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](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/TA101](http://www.nice.org.uk/TA101)*

*You can order printed copies of this leaflet from the NHS Response Line (phone 0870 1555 455 and quote reference N1057).*