

## Understanding NICE guidance

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Information for people who use NHS services

# Lenalidomide for multiple myeloma in people who have had previous treatment

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

This leaflet is about when **lenalidomide** should be used to treat people with multiple myeloma who have already had other treatment for it 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 people with multiple myeloma but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe multiple myeloma or the treatments in detail – a member of your healthcare team should discuss these with you. You can get more information from the organisations listed on the back page.



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

## What has NICE said?

Lenalidomide (used together with a medicine called dexamethasone) is recommended as a possible treatment for people with multiple myeloma who have already had at least two other treatments. The manufacturer of lenalidomide has agreed to cover the cost of the drug for people who stay on treatment for more than 26 cycles (normally a period of 2 years).

Healthcare professionals should not stop prescribing lenalidomide for people with multiple myeloma who were already taking it when the guidance was issued, but who have not already had two or more other treatments. These people should be able to carry on taking lenalidomide until they and their healthcare professional(s) decide that it is the right time to stop treatment.

## Multiple myeloma

Myeloma is a type of cancer that develops from cells called plasma cells, which are found in the bone marrow. It is described as 'multiple' because it can occur in several places in the body. Symptoms can include bone pain, bone fractures, anaemia, loss of appetite, excessive bleeding after cuts or scrapes, and frequent infections.

Although there is no cure for multiple myeloma at present, treatments are available that can slow down the progress of the condition, control the symptoms and improve a person's quality of life.

## Lenalidomide

Lenalidomide (Revlimid) is an anticancer drug that belongs to a class of drugs known as immunomodulating agents. The exact way it works is not known, but it can prevent the growth of cancer cells and boost the body's immune response.

Lenalidomide is taken orally as a capsule once daily on days 1 to 21 of a 28-day 'cycle'. This is followed by a 7-day break before starting the next cycle.

### What does this mean for me?

When NICE recommends a treatment, the NHS must make sure it is available to those people it could help, normally within 3 months of the guidance being issued. So, if you have multiple myeloma, you have already had two or more other treatments and your doctor thinks that lenalidomide 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 the treatment is not available.

If you are already taking lenalidomide for multiple myeloma, you should be able to continue taking it until you and your healthcare professional(s) decide it is the right time to stop.

## More information

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

- Leukaemia CARE, 0800 169 6680  
[www.leukaemiacare.org.uk](http://www.leukaemiacare.org.uk)
- Leukaemia Research, 020 7269 9060  
[www.lrf.org.uk](http://www.lrf.org.uk)
- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0808 808 2020  
[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)
- Myeloma UK, 0800 980 3332  
[www.myeloma.org.uk](http://www.myeloma.org.uk)
- Rarer Cancers Forum, 01227 738 279  
[www.rarercancers.org.uk](http://www.rarercancers.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, 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/ITA171](http://www.nice.org.uk/ITA171)*

*You can order printed copies of this leaflet from NICE publications (phone 0845 003 7783 or email [publications@nice.org.uk](mailto:publications@nice.org.uk) and quote reference N1880). 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 multiple myeloma.*