

## Understanding NICE guidance

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Information for people who use NHS services

# Ustekinumab for the treatment of adults with moderate to severe psoriasis

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

This leaflet is about when **ustekinumab** should be used to treat adults with moderate to severe plaque psoriasis 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 moderate to severe plaque psoriasis but it may also be useful for their families or carers or anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe moderate to severe plaque psoriasis 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.

*This may not be the only possible treatment for moderate to severe plaque psoriasis. Your healthcare team should talk to you about whether it is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.*

## What has NICE said?

Ustekinumab is recommended as a possible treatment for people with plaque psoriasis if:

- standard assessments show that their psoriasis is severe and is affecting their quality of life **and**
- their psoriasis has not improved with other treatments including ciclosporin, methotrexate and PUVA (psoralen and long-wave ultraviolet radiation), or they have had side effects with these treatments in the past or there is a medical reason why they should not be given them.

The manufacturer of ustekinumab has agreed to a 'patient access scheme' which means that they provide the higher dose needed for people who weigh more than 100 kg at the same total cost as the lower dose for people who weigh 100 kg or less.

Ustekinumab treatment should be stopped if standard assessments show that a person's psoriasis has not clearly improved after 16 weeks.

When assessing how a person's psoriasis affects their quality of life, healthcare professionals should take into account any disabilities or difficulties in communicating which might mean that the standard assessments do not provide accurate information.

## Plaque psoriasis

Plaque psoriasis is a skin condition in which a person has raised red patches of skin covered with silvery scales. These patches can develop on any part of the body, but are usually found on the elbows, knees and scalp. They are often itchy, but can also be sore, burning and painful. In people with severe plaque psoriasis, the patches can cover most of the body.

## Ustekinumab

Ustekinumab (also known as Stelara) improves plaque psoriasis by interfering with substances in the body called interleukins that are involved in the development of inflammation. Ustekinumab is injected under the skin. After the first dose, another dose is given after 4 weeks and then further doses every 12 weeks.

### 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 standard assessments show that your plaque psoriasis is severe and is affecting your quality of life, your psoriasis has not improved after other treatments (or you are unable to have those other treatments), and your doctor thinks that ustekinumab is the right treatment for you, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS. You may be asked to be part of a 'patient access scheme' and your doctor should talk with you about the requirements of the scheme. Please see [www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance](http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutguidance) if the treatment is not available.

## More information

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

- The Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Alliance, 0870 770 3212  
[www.papaa.org](http://www.papaa.org)
- The Psoriasis Association, 0845 676 0076  
[www.psoriasis-association.org.uk](http://www.psoriasis-association.org.uk)
- Skin Care Campaign  
[www.skincarecampaign.org](http://www.skincarecampaign.org)

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 also 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 condition 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/TA180](http://www.nice.org.uk/TA180)*

*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 N1990). 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 psoriasis.*