

Understanding NICE guidance

Information for people who use NHS services

Topotecan for recurrent and stage IVB cervical 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 **topotecan** should be used to treat women with recurrent or stage IVB cervical 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 women with recurrent or stage IVB cervical cancer but it may also be useful for their families or carers or anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe recurrent or stage IVB cervical cancer 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 recurrent or stage IVB cervical cancer. Your healthcare team should talk to you about whether it is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.

What has NICE said?

Topotecan in combination with cisplatin is recommended as a possible treatment for women with recurrent or stage IVB cervical cancer only if they have not received cisplatin before.

Healthcare professionals should not stop prescribing topotecan for women who have received cisplatin before and who were already taking topotecan with cisplatin when the guidance was issued. These women should be able to carry on taking topotecan until they and their healthcare professionals decide that it is the right time to stop treatment.

Recurrent and stage IVB cervical cancer

Cervical cancer is cancer of the neck of the womb. Stage IVB cervical cancer means that cancerous cells have spread to distant organs, such as the lungs, liver or bone. Cancer is described as recurrent when it comes back in a person thought to be cancer free after treatment.

Topotecan

Topotecan (also known as Hycamtin) is a drug that stops cancer cells from multiplying. It is given through a drip in the vein.

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 recurrent or stage IVB cervical cancer, you have not received cisplatin before, and your doctor thinks that topotecan in combination with cisplatin 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 the treatment is not available.

If you are already taking topotecan for recurrent or stage IVB cervical cancer but you have been treated with cisplatin before, you should be able to continue taking topotecan until you and your healthcare professional decide it is the right time to stop.

More information

The organisations below can provide more information and support for women with recurrent or stage IVB cervical cancer. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- CancerHelp UK (the patient information website of Cancer Research UK), 0808 800 4040
www.cancerhelp.org.uk
- Jo's Trust, 020 7936 7498
www.jotrust.co.uk
- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0808 808 00 00
www.macmillan.org.uk
- Rarer Cancers Forum, 01227 738279
www.rarercancers.org.uk

NHS Choices (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 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

This leaflet and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at www.nice.org.uk/TA183

*You can order printed copies of this leaflet from NICE publications (phone 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote reference N2015). 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 recurrent or stage IVB cervical cancer.