

## Understanding NICE guidance

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Information for people who use NHS services

# Etanercept, infliximab and adalimumab for psoriatic arthritis

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

This leaflet is about when **etanercept, infliximab** and **adalimumab** should be used to treat people with psoriatic arthritis 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 psoriatic arthritis but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe psoriatic arthritis 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.



*These may not be the only possible treatments for psoriatic arthritis. Your healthcare team should talk to you about whether they are suitable for you and about other treatment options available.*

## **What has NICE said?**

NICE recommends etanercept, infliximab and adalimumab as possible treatments for some people with psoriatic arthritis (see below).

### **Who can have etanercept, infliximab and adalimumab?**

You should be able to have etanercept, infliximab and adalimumab if you have three tender and three swollen joints and you have already tried at least two disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs), given on their own or together, but they haven't worked.

Only people whose psoriatic arthritis improves enough by 12 weeks should be able to carry on with treatment.

When assessing whether your psoriatic arthritis has improved, healthcare professionals should take into account any disabilities or difficulties in communicating you might have.

### **Why has NICE said this?**

NICE looks at how well treatments work, and also at how well they work in relation to how much they cost the NHS. NICE recommended etanercept, infliximab and adalimumab because they work well, and their cost is justified by the benefits they provide.

## Psoriatic arthritis

People with psoriatic arthritis have painful, swollen or stiff joints, as well as psoriasis – red patches of skin covered with silvery scales often described as ‘plaques’.

Psoriatic arthritis is described as ‘active’ when the skin or joint symptoms of the condition occur. The condition is progressive, which means that it gets worse over time.

## Etanercept, infliximab and adalimumab

People with psoriatic arthritis produce too much of a substance called ‘TNF alpha’, which is thought to be involved in causing inflammation of the skin and joints.

Etanercept, infliximab and adalimumab stop TNF alpha working in the body, reducing the pain and inflammation.

### 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 active and progressive psoriatic arthritis, and you and your doctor think that etanercept, infliximab or adalimumab is the right treatment for you (see ‘What has NICE said?’ on page 2), 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 think you are eligible for the treatment but it is not available.

## More information

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

- Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Alliance (PAPAA), 01923 672837  
[www.papaa.org](http://www.papaa.org)
- The Psoriasis Association, 08456 760 076  
[www.psoriasis-association.org.uk](http://www.psoriasis-association.org.uk)
- Skin Care Campaign, 020 8378 1497  
[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 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, nurses and other healthcare professionals, 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/guidance/TA199](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA199)*

*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 N2279). 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 psoriatic arthritis.*