

## Prucalopride for treating chronic constipation in women

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

This leaflet is about when **prucalopride** should be used to treat women with chronic constipation 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 chronic constipation but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe chronic constipation 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 over the page.



*This may not be the only possible treatment for chronic constipation. Your doctor should talk to you about whether it is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.*

## What has NICE said?

NICE recommends prucalopride as a possible treatment for women with chronic constipation.

## Who can have prucalopride?

You should be able to have prucalopride if:

- you have tried at least two different types of laxatives at the highest possible recommended doses, for at least 6 months, and this has not helped your constipation **and**
- you and your doctor are considering invasive treatment for your constipation.

If prucalopride is not working well enough after 4 weeks of treatment, you and your doctor should discuss whether to carry on with it.

Your doctor should only offer you prucalopride if they have experience of treating chronic constipation and have taken into careful consideration the laxatives you have used before you decided to try prucalopride.

## 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 prucalopride because it works better than other treatments available on the NHS. Although it also costs more than other treatments, this was justified by the benefits it provided.

## Chronic constipation

Constipation can have different effects: you might not pass stools (faeces) as often as you normally do, you might have to strain more than usual or you might be unable to completely empty your bowels. Constipation is considered to be chronic if it has affected you for a long time.

Invasive treatment for constipation can involve a suppository (medication inserted into your anus) or an enema, when fluid is injected through your anus into your bowel to free up the faeces that is stuck.

## Prucalopride

Prucalopride works by helping stools move through your intestine, a long tube that food passes through while it is being digested.

Prucalopride has not been tested in enough men to show that it works for them, so only women can take this drug.

### 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 chronic constipation, and you and your doctor think that prucalopride 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 women with chronic constipation. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- Bladder and Bowel Foundation, 01536 533255  
[www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org](http://www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org)
- Guts UK Charity: Funding research to fight diseases of the gut, liver & pancreas  
[www.gutscharity.org.uk](http://www.gutscharity.org.uk)
- PromoCon, 0161 834 2001  
[www.promocon.co.uk](http://www.promocon.co.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 condition 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/TA211](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA211)*

*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 N2397). 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 chronic constipation.*

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