

## Understanding NICE guidance

---

Information for people who use NHS services

# Dexamethasone intravitreal implant for macular oedema due to retinal vein occlusion

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

This leaflet is about when **dexamethasone intravitreal implant** should be used to treat people with macular oedema due to retinal vein occlusion 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 macular oedema due to retinal vein occlusion but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe macular oedema, retinal vein occlusion or the treatments in detail – your ophthalmologist should discuss these with you. You can get more information from the organisations listed on page 4.

*This may not be the only possible treatment for macular oedema due to retinal vein occlusion. Your ophthalmologist should talk to you about whether it is suitable for you and about other treatment options available.*

## What has NICE said?

NICE recommends dexamethasone intravitreal implant as a possible treatment for some people with macular oedema due to retinal vein occlusion (see below).

## Who can have dexamethasone intravitreal implant?

You should be able to have dexamethasone intravitreal implant if:

- you have macular oedema due to blockage of the central retinal vein, **or**
- you have macular oedema due to blockage of a branch retinal vein, **and**
  - laser treatment has not helped, **or**
  - laser treatment is not suitable.

## 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 dexamethasone intravitreal implant because it improves vision compared with best supportive care. Although it costs more, this was justified by the benefits provided.

## Macular oedema after retinal vein occlusion

The macula is the central part of the retina at the back of the eye. When the retinal vein becomes blocked (retinal vein occlusion) blood can leak into the macula causing it to swell. This is known as macular oedema and can affect vision.

## Dexamethasone intravitreal implant

Dexamethasone is a steroid that reduces inflammation. It is implanted into the side of the eye by intravitreal injection (intravitreal implant) to reduce macular oedema caused by blockage of the retinal 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 macular oedema due to retinal vein occlusion, and you and your doctor think that dexamethasone intravitreal implant 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 macular oedema due to retinal vein occlusion. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- Macular Disease Society, 0845 241 2041  
[www.maculardisease.org](http://www.maculardisease.org)
- RNIB, 0303 123 9999  
[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.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, 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/TA229](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA229)*

*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 N2617, or N2623 for the large print version). 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 macular oedema due to retinal vein occlusion.*