

Lapatinib or trastuzumab in combination with an aromatase inhibitor for first treatment of metastatic breast cancer that is hormone-receptor and HER2 positive

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

This document is about when **lapatinib** or **trastuzumab** in combination with an aromatase inhibitor should be used to treat women with metastatic breast 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 metastatic breast cancer but it may also be useful for their families or carers or for anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe metastatic breast cancer or the treatments in detail – your specialist should discuss these with you. You can get more information from the organisations listed on page 4.



There are several possible treatments for breast cancer. Your healthcare team should talk to you about the treatment options available.

What has NICE said?

NICE does not recommend lapatinib or trastuzumab in combination with an aromatase inhibitor for women who have been through the menopause and who have metastatic breast cancer that is hormone receptor and HER2 positive.

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 applies special considerations to treatments that can extend the lives of people who are nearing the end of their life. Lapatinib and trastuzumab do not provide enough benefit to patients to justify their high cost even when the special considerations were applied, so NICE did not recommend them.

Metastatic breast cancer that is hormone receptor and HER2 positive

Breast cancer that has spread to other parts of the body is known as metastatic breast cancer. For some women, the hormones oestrogen or progesterone stimulate breast cancer cells to grow. This type of breast cancer is known as hormone-receptor positive. HER2-positive means that there are high levels of a protein called HER2 on the surface of the cancer cells. Another protein produced naturally in the body attaches itself to the HER2 protein, which makes the cancer grow.

Lapatinib and trastuzumab

Lapatinib and trastuzumab are drugs used to treat breast cancer that target the HER2 protein. They attach to the HER2 protein and stop the cancer cells growing. They can be given in combination with a type of anticancer drug called an aromatase inhibitor.

Aromatase inhibitors are drugs used to treat breast cancer that is hormone-receptor positive. They attach to the hormone receptor and stop the hormones that make cancer cells grow from reaching the cancer cells.

What does this mean for me?

Lapatinib and trastuzumab in combination with an aromatase inhibitor should not normally be prescribed on the NHS for metastatic breast cancer. Your doctor should talk to you about other treatment options available to you.

NICE will decide whether to review this guidance in June 2015.

If you are already taking lapatinib or trastuzumab in combination with an aromatase inhibitor for metastatic breast cancer, you should be able to continue taking it until you and your specialist decide it is the right time to stop.

More information

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

- Breakthrough Breast Cancer, 08080 100 200
www.breakthrough.org.uk
- Breast Cancer Care, 0808 800 6000
www.breastcancercare.org.uk
- CancerHelp UK, 0808 800 4040
www.cancerhelp.org.uk
- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0808 808 0000
www.macmillan.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 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

This document and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA257

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 document in their own information about breast cancer.

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