

# Rituximab with glucocorticoids for anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody-associated vasculitis

Information for the public

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## What has NICE said?

Rituximab taken with glucocorticoids is recommended as a possible treatment for people with anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody-associated vasculitis (that is, severely active granulomatosis with polyangiitis [also known as Wegener's granulomatosis] and microscopic polyangiitis) if:

- more treatment with cyclophosphamide would exceed the maximum amount of cyclophosphamide they can have **or**
- cyclophosphamide is not suitable for them or they cannot take it **or**
- they want to have children and treatment with cyclophosphamide may affect their fertility **or**
- the disease has stayed active or got worse after a course of cyclophosphamide lasting 3–6 months **or**

- the person has had cancer affecting the lining of the bladder and other parts of the urinary system.

## What does this mean for me?

If you have anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody-associated vasculitis as described above, and your doctor thinks that rituximab is the right treatment, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS.

Rituximab should be available on the NHS within 3 months of the guidance being issued. If you are not eligible for treatment as described above but you are already being treated with rituximab within the NHS, you should be able to continue taking it until you and your doctor decide it is the right time to stop.

## Why has NICE said this?

Rituximab was recommended 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.

NICE looks at how well treatments work in relation to how much they cost compared with other treatments available on the NHS.

## The condition and the treatments

Vasculitis is the general name for a group of diseases of the immune system that cause inflammation of blood vessels. Anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody-associated vasculitis involves small blood vessels including the capillaries, and usually affects the kidneys, lungs, ears, eyes, nose and sinuses.

Severely active granulomatosis with polyangiitis (also known as Wegener's granulomatosis) and microscopic polyangiitis are types of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody-associated vasculitis.

Rituximab (MabThera) is a manufactured antibody that destroys B cells, which are the part of the immune system thought to be involved in this type of vasculitis. It is taken with

drugs known as glucocorticoids.

NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) may be a good place to find out more.

## Sources of advice and support

- Vasculitis UK, 0300 365 0075, [www.vasculitis.org.uk](http://www.vasculitis.org.uk)

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## Accreditation

