

# Omalizumab for previously treated chronic spontaneous urticaria

Information for the public

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[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

## What has NICE said?

Omalizumab (Xolair) is recommended as a possible treatment for people aged 12 years and over with severe chronic spontaneous urticaria if:

- a doctor has objectively diagnosed the condition as severe
- the condition has not improved with standard treatment with H<sub>1</sub>-antihistamines or leukotriene receptor antagonists
- the drug is stopped at or before the fourth dose if the condition has not responded
- the drug is stopped at the end of a course of treatment (6 doses) if the condition has responded, and is only restarted if the condition comes back
- the drug is given by a secondary care specialist in dermatology, immunology or allergy.

## What does this mean for me?

If you have chronic spontaneous urticaria, and your doctor thinks that omalizumab is the right treatment, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS.

Omalizumab 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 are already taking omalizumab, you should be able to continue treatment until you and your doctor decide it is the right time to stop.

## Why has NICE said this?

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

NICE recommended omalizumab because the benefit to patients justifies the cost.

## The condition and the treatment

Urticaria (also called hives) is a raised, itchy rash. It is chronic if it lasts on and off for at least 6 weeks. The rash can affect 1 part of the body or can spread across large areas. Some people sometimes also develop swelling of the lips, tongue or other areas of the body. With spontaneous urticaria, the symptoms are thought to be caused by the immune system mistakenly attacking healthy tissue. Antihistamines and leukotriene receptor antagonists are types of drugs used to treat the symptoms of urticaria.

Omalizumab (Xolair) works by blocking the action of IgE. This is a substance that plays a part in the immune system and is thought to cause the symptoms of urticaria.

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

## Sources of advice and support

- Allergy UK, 01322 619898, [www.allergyuk.org](http://www.allergyuk.org)

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## Accreditation

