

# Pembrolizumab for treating advanced melanoma after disease progression with ipilimumab

Information for the public  
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[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

## What has NICE said?

Pembrolizumab (Keytruda) is recommended. This drug is a possible treatment for adults with melanoma that:

- can't be completely removed by surgery or has spread to other parts of the body
- has been treated with ipilimumab (melanoma that is BRAF V600 mutation-positive must also have had treatment with vemurafenib, dabrafenib, or trametinib).

## What does this mean for me?

If you have advanced (unresectable or metastatic) melanoma and your doctor thinks that

pembrolizumab is the right treatment, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS.

Pembrolizumab should be available on the NHS within 3 months of the guidance being issued. Because pembrolizumab was made available in the NHS through the 'early access to medicines' scheme, NHS England has indicated that it will be available on the NHS 30 days after the guidance is issued.

## 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 applies special considerations to treatments that can extend the lives of people who are nearing the end of their life. Pembrolizumab was recommended because it works better than other treatments available on the NHS. Although it costs more than other treatments, this was justified by the benefits it provided when the special considerations were applied.

## The condition and the treatment

Melanoma is a type of skin cancer. Advanced melanoma is when the cancer can't be completely removed by surgery (unresectable) or has spread to other parts of the body (metastatic). One type of melanoma has a change in the cells called the 'BRAF V600 mutation'. This makes it produce too much BRAF protein, and this protein makes the cancer cells grow and divide.

Pembrolizumab (Keytruda) is a drug given by injection, which helps the body's immune system to recognise and destroy melanoma cells.

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

## Sources of advice and support

- CancerHelp UK (the patient information website of Cancer Research UK), 0808 800 4040, [www.cancerhelp.org.uk](http://www.cancerhelp.org.uk)

- Macmillan Cancer Support, 0808 808 0000, [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)
- Melanoma UK, 0808 171 2455, [www.melanomauk.org.uk](http://www.melanomauk.org.uk)
- Skcin – Karen Clifford Skin Cancer Charity, [www.skcin.org](http://www.skcin.org)

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## Accreditation

