

Beta interferons and glatiramer acetate for treating multiple sclerosis

Information for the public

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Interferon beta-1a (Avonex, Rebif) and glatiramer acetate (Copaxone) are available on the NHS as possible treatments for multiple sclerosis if it is relapsing–remitting.

Interferon beta-1b (Extavia) is available on the NHS as a possible treatment for multiple sclerosis if:

- it is relapsing–remitting and there have been 2 or more relapses within the the last 2 years or
- it is secondary progressive with continuing relapses.

If you are not eligible for interferon beta-1a (Avonex, Rebif), interferon beta-1b (Extavia) or glatiramer acetate (Copaxone) but are already taking one of them, you should be able to continue until you and your doctor decide when best to stop.

Interferon beta-1b (Betaferon) is not normally available on the NHS for treating multiple sclerosis. Your doctor should talk with you about other treatment options. If you are already taking it, you should be able to continue until you and your doctor decide when best to stop.

Is this treatment right for me?

Your healthcare professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. Your family can be involved too, if you wish. Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Questions to think about

- How well does it work compared with other treatments?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- How will the treatment affect my day-to-day life?
- What happens if the treatment does not work?
- What happens if I do not want to have treatment? Are there other treatments available?

Information and support

[NHS Choices](#) may be a good place to find out more.

These organisations can give you advice and support:

- [Multiple Sclerosis Society](#), 0808 800 8000
- [Multiple Sclerosis Trust](#), 0800 032 3839

You can also get support from your local [Healthwatch](#).

NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

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