

Understanding NICE guidance

Information for people who use NHS services

Omalizumab for severe persistent allergic asthma in children aged 6 to 11 years

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

This leaflet is about when **omalizumab** should be used to treat children aged 6 to 11 years with severe persistent allergic asthma 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 parents and carers of children with severe persistent allergic asthma but it may also be useful for children with severe persistent allergic asthma themselves, or anyone with an interest in the condition.

It does not describe severe persistent allergic asthma or the treatments in detail – a member of the child's healthcare team should discuss these with you. You can get more information from the organisations listed on the back page.



There are several possible treatments for severe persistent allergic asthma in children aged 6 to 11 years. Your child's healthcare team should talk to you and your child about the treatment options available.

What has NICE said?

NICE does not recommend omalizumab for children aged 6 to 11 years with severe persistent allergic asthma.

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. Omalizumab does not provide enough benefit to children aged 6 to 11 years to justify its high cost.

Severe persistent allergic asthma

Asthma is a common condition that causes the airways to become narrower. Children with asthma have breathing difficulties, wheezing, coughing and feel a tightness in their chest. These symptoms get worse when they have an 'asthma attack'. Allergic asthma is caused by an allergy (for example, an allergy to pollen or dust mites). Children with severe persistent allergic asthma have frequent asthma attacks and often wake during the night because of their asthma.

Omalizumab

Omalizumab (also known as Xolair) works by blocking the action of a substance in the body that causes the symptoms of allergic asthma. Omalizumab is used with other asthma treatments to help reduce the symptoms of allergic asthma.

What does this mean for me?

Omalizumab should not normally be prescribed on the NHS for severe persistent allergic asthma in children aged 6 to 11 years. Your child's doctor should talk to you and your child about other treatment options available. If your child is already taking omalizumab for severe persistent allergic asthma, he or she should be able to continue taking it until it is considered appropriate to stop. This decision should be made jointly by the child's doctor, the child and/or the child's parents or carers.

NICE will decide whether to review this guidance in October 2010.

More information

The organisations below can provide more information and support for children with severe persistent allergic asthma and their parents or carers. NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

- Action Against Allergy, 020 8892 2711
www.actionagainstallergy.co.uk
- Action for Sick Children, 0800 074 4519
www.actionforsickchildren.org
- Allergy UK, 01322 619898
www.allergyuk.org
- Asthma UK, 0800 121 6244
www.asthma.org.uk
- British Lung Foundation, 08458 505020
www.lunguk.org

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 condition 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 leaflet and other versions of the guidance aimed at healthcare professionals are available at www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA201

You can order printed copies of this leaflet from NICE publications (phone 0845 003 7783 or email publications@nice.org.uk and quote reference N2333). 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 leaflet in their own information about severe persistent allergic asthma in children aged 6 to 11 years.