



Medicine: nivolumab (brand name: Opdivo®)

Bristol-Myers Squibb Pharmaceuticals Ltd

The Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) has assessed nivolumab for the treatment of adults with oesophageal squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC) that is unresectable (cannot be removed by surgery), and is advanced, recurrent or metastatic (has spread to other parts of the body). It is used after another cancer treatment called fluoropyrimidine and platinum based chemotherapy. This document summarises the SMC decision and what it means for patients.

What has SMC said?

After careful consideration, SMC has accepted nivolumab for treating adults with OSCC as described above.

This SMC advice takes into account a confidential discount offered by the pharmaceutical company that improves the cost-effectiveness of nivolumab. In addition, SMC was able to apply a more [flexible approach*](#) in the assessment, as it is for a rare condition where patients are likely to have a life expectancy of less than three years with currently available treatments.

What does SMC's decision mean for patients?

If your healthcare professional thinks that nivolumab for use as described above is the right medicine for you, you should be able to have the treatment on the NHS in Scotland.



What is nivolumab used for?

Nivolumab is used to treat a type of oesophageal cancer called OSCC. Oesophageal cancer is cancer that develops in cells of the gullet (the muscular tube that connects the mouth to the stomach). OSCC is a rare form of oesophageal cancer that affects a specific type of cells lining the gullet.

How does nivolumab work?

Nivolumab is an immunotherapy. This is a type of cancer treatment that stimulates the immune system (the body's natural defence system) to fight the cancer. Some cancer cells produce proteins that switch off immune cells called T-cells. Nivolumab attaches to a protein on the T-cells called PD-1. This stops the cancer from switching off the T-cells, helping the immune system fight the cancer.

*<https://www.scottishmedicines.org.uk/how-we-decide/pace/>

How does SMC make its decision?

SMC carefully considers every new medicine to make sure it benefits patients and is considered to be an acceptable use of the limited resources in NHSScotland.

To do this SMC consider the following:

- Evidence from the company about how well the medicine works compared with current treatments available in Scotland, in relation to how much they will cost to buy and administer.
- Information from patient groups about the potential impact of the medicine on patients and carers.
- Advice from healthcare professionals about any benefits of the new medicine compared to current treatment, along with how the new medicine is likely to be used.

When SMC assesses a medicine it takes account of the needs of all patients in NHSScotland, not just those who may be treated with the medicine under consideration.

You can find more detailed information about the SMC assessment of nivolumab by looking at the SMC Detailed Advice Document (SMC2362).

More information

The organisations below can provide more information and support for people with oesophageal cancer and their families. SMC is not responsible for the content of any information provided by external organisations.

OCHRE



<http://www.ochrecharity.org.uk>



0800 822 3370

Guts UK Charity



<https://gutscharity.org.uk>



0207 486 0341

You can find out more about nivolumab (Opdivo®) in the European public assessment report (EPAR) summary for the public by searching for the medicine name on the European Medicines Agency (EMA) website.



<https://www.ema.europa.eu/en>