

UK considers preventative drugs for breast cancer (Update)

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Britain's National Health Service may soon offer women at high risk of developing breast cancer drugs normally used to treat the disease as a prevention strategy.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on Tuesday announced draft guidelines that would make the drugs available.

A final decision is expected this spring after medical groups, charities and patients' organization respond to the proposal.

The proposal suggests that tamoxifen or raloxifene should be used by women found at high risk of developing the disease.

Clinical trials have shown the drugs can be effective in cutting breast cancer rates, and the medications are used both to treat and to prevent the disease in other countries, including the United States.

Initial response from charities and patients groups to the proposal has been favorable.

The charity Breakthrough Breast Cancer called the move "an historic step" in the fight against the deadly disease.

Specialist nurse Jackie Harris with the Breast Cancer Care charity said the proposal could be "very good news" for women with a family history of breast cancer, but doctors cautioned that the drugs cannot be viewed

as a vaccine against breast cancer.

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