

[Eye Cancer - Latest Research](#) [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 08/2015

ON THIS PAGE: You will read about the scientific research being done now to learn more about this type of cancer and how to treat it. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Doctors are working to learn more about eye cancer, ways to prevent it, how to best treat it, and how to provide the best care to people diagnosed with this disease. The following areas of research may include new options for patients through [clinical trials](#) [3]. Always talk with your doctor about the diagnostic and treatment options best for you.

- **Targeted therapy for melanoma.** Researchers are studying the genes, proteins, and other factors that may be involved in the development of intraocular melanoma. Targeted therapy is a treatment that targets the cancer's specific genes, proteins, or the tissue environment that contributes to cancer growth and survival.

Recent studies show that not all tumors have the same targets. Many research studies are taking place now to find out more about specific molecular targets and new treatments directed at them. In particular for eye cancers, MEK inhibitors are a type of targeted therapy being actively researched. Learn more about the basics of [targeted treatments](#) [4].

- **Tumor Markers.** Researchers are also looking for markers, or specific substances in the blood, that may tell the doctor if the tumor has spread to other parts of the body.
- **Immunotherapy.** Immunotherapy is also called biologic therapy, which is designed to

boost the body's natural defenses to fight cancer. It uses materials either made by the body or in a laboratory to bolster, target, or restore immune system function. Monoclonal antibodies, which specifically target and kill cancer cells, are a type of immunotherapy being tested in clinical trials. Learn more about [immunotherapy](#) [5].

- **Improved radiation therapy.** Many hospitals and cancer centers offer methods that focus radiation therapy to the tumor to help reduce damage to the rest of the eye. One of these methods, called intensity-modulated proton therapy (IMPT), is being used for some types of eye cancer.
- **Chemotherapy.** [Chemotherapy](#) [6] is the use of drugs to kill cancer cells, usually by stopping the cancer cells' ability to grow and divide. Chemotherapy is given by a medical oncologist, a doctor who specializes in treating cancer with medication.

Systemic chemotherapy gets into the bloodstream to reach cancer cells throughout the body. A chemotherapy regimen usually consists of a specific number of cycles given over a set period of time. A patient may receive one drug at a time or combinations of different drugs at the same time.

For patients with metastatic uveal melanoma, adjuvant therapy (additional treatment after the primary treatment, such as chemotherapy after surgery) is being tested in clinical trials.

- **Treating liver metastases.** Because intraocular melanoma commonly metastasizes to the liver, many people need treatment to the liver. A technique called chemoembolization allows doctors to separate the blood supply of the liver from the rest of the body and then deliver chemotherapy directly to the liver. However, the use of this treatment varies and is still being researched. Talk with your doctor for more information.
- **Palliative care.** Clinical trials are underway to find better ways of reducing symptoms and side effects of current eye cancer treatments in order to improve patients' comfort and quality of life.

Looking for More About the Latest Research?

If you would like additional information about the latest areas of research regarding eye cancer, explore these related items that take you outside of this guide:

- To find clinical trials specific to your diagnosis, talk with your doctor [or search online clinical trial databases now](#) [7].

- Visit ASCO's [CancerProgress.Net](#) [8] to learn more about the historical pace of research for melanoma.
- Visit the website of the [Conquer Cancer Foundation](#) [9] to find out how to help support research for every cancer type. Please note this link takes you to a separate ASCO website.

The [next section in this guide is Coping with Side Effects](#) [10] and it offers some guidance in how to cope with the physical, emotional, and social changes that cancer and its treatment can bring. Or, use the menu on the side of your screen to choose another section to continue reading this guide.

Links

- [1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/eye-cancer/latest-research>
- [2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>
- [3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18819>
- [4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24729>
- [5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24726>
- [6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24723>
- [7] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24878>
- [8] <http://www.cancerprogress.net/timeline/melanoma>
- [9] <http://www.conquercancerfoundation.org/research-results>
- [10] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18820>