Maintenance Therapy With Pemetrexed Delays Growth of Advanced Lung Cancer [1]

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Results from a recent study showed that maintenance therapy with the drug pemetrexed (Alimta) lengthened the time it takes for advanced nonsquamous non-small cell lung cancer to worsen. Maintenance therapy is the use of ongoing chemotherapy after the initial treatment.

In the study, 939 patients received the standard chemotherapy with pemetrexed and cisplatin (Platinol). Of those, 539 patients with cancer that had not worsened were given maintenance therapy with pemetrexed or a placebo (an inactive treatment) along with supportive care. Researchers found that almost 72% of patients who received pemetrexed maintenance therapy had their tumor shrink or stop growing, compared with nearly 60% of the patients who received a placebo.

What this means for patients

?These results suggest that patients can still continue to benefit from the use of the same drug,? said lead author Luis Paz-Ares, MD, PhD, Chair of Oncology at Seville University Hospital in Seville, Spain. ?Maintenance therapy may be a good option for when treatment is working without significant side effects. A lot of factors go into the treatment decision, and each patient should be informed.?

Questions to ask your doctor

- What type of lung cancer do I have? What is the stage?
- What are my treatment options?
- Do you recommend additional treatments after the main treatment is complete?
- What are the side effects of each treatment, and how can they be managed?

For More Information

Guide to Lung Cancer [2]

Explaining Maintenance Therapy [3]

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/maintenance-therapy-pemetrexed-delays-growth-advanced-lung-cancer
[2] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Lung+Cancer
[3] http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Treatments%2C+Tests%2C+and+Proce