

Maintenance Therapy with Rituximab Reduces Risk of Lymphoma Recurrence

Recent research shows that patients with follicular lymphoma who received the drug rituximab (Rituxan) for two years as maintenance therapy were less likely to have a recurrence (return of cancer after treatment). Maintenance therapy is longer-term treatment given after initial treatment to keep the cancer from returning.

This study looked at patients with stage III or IV follicular lymphoma who received rituximab as an initial treatment to shrink the cancer or get rid of it entirely. Then, one group of patients was given an additional two years of rituximab. The patients who did not receive this additional treatment were twice as likely as patients who continued with rituximab to have the lymphoma grow and spread. Patients who received rituximab were more likely to experience infections than those who did not receive the drug.

What This Means for Patients

"These findings provide hope for the way we manage this disease. Rituximab maintenance therapy is likely to become a new standard of care for these patients," said lead author Gilles Salles, MD, Professor of Medicine at the University of Lyon in France. Most patients with this type of lymphoma have a recurrence within three to six years after initial treatment. This study only looked at the risk of recurrence during the two years the patients received rituximab; it's not yet known if using rituximab can also reduce the risk of a recurrence later. Talk with your doctor about all treatment options, including those to help delay recurrence or treat a recurrence.

What to Ask Your Doctor

- What type of lymphoma do I have?
- What is the chance that the lymphoma will come back after treatment?
- What are my treatment options?
- What treatment do you recommend? Why?
- Do the benefits of this treatment outweigh the risks or side effects?

For More Information

[Guide to Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma](#) [1]

[ASCO Answers Fact Sheet: Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma](#) [2]

[Explaining Maintenance Therapy](#) [3]

Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Lymphoma+-+Non-Hodgkin>

[2] http://www.cancer.net/sites/cancer.net/files/vignette/ASCO_Answers_NHL.pdf

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Treatments%2C+Tests%2C+and+Procedures/Explaining+Maintenance+Therapy>