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New High-Dose Chemotherapy Regimen Helps Children With Neuroblastoma Live Longer [1]

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A recent study showed that children with high-risk neuroblastoma who received the drugs busulphan (Busulfex, Mitosan, Myleran) and melphalan (Alkeran) lived longer than children who received the drugs carboplatin (Paraplat, Paraplatin), etoposide (Toposar, VePesid), and melphalan, a regimen called CEM. High-risk means that the neuroblastoma is likely to worsen or recur (come back after treatment). These combinations of drugs are given in high doses to kill cancer cells in the bone marrow (spongy, red tissue inside of bones).

The children who participated in this study had neuroblastoma that had spread or neuroblastoma with a specific genetic mutation (change) and received either a combination of busulphan and melphalan or the CEM regimen. After three years, 49% of the children who received busulphan and melphalan did not have the disease worsen or recur, compared with 33% of those who received CEM. In addition, 60% of the children who received busulphan and melphalan were alive after three years, compared with 48% of the children who received CEM.

What this means for patients

?These results mean that choosing the right high-dose chemotherapy regimen could help more than half of children with high-risk neuroblastoma live longer,? said lead author Ruth Ladenstein, MD, MBA, Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Vienna and St. Anna Children's Cancer Research Institute in Vienna, Austria.

Questions to ask your child's doctor

- What are the chances that my child's neuroblastoma could worsen or recur?
- What are the treatment options?
- What treatment plan do you recommend? Why?
- What is my child's prognosis (chance of recovery)?

For More Information

Guide to Neuroblastoma [2]

Cancer in Children [3]

Understanding Chemotherapy [4]

Childhood Cancer Survivorship [5]

Late Effects of Childhood Cancer [6]

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/new-high-dose-chemotherapy-regimen-helps-children-neuroblastoma-live-longer
[2] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Neuroblastoma+-+Childhood
[3] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Children
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[5] http://www.cancer.net/patient/Survivorship/Childhood+Cancer+Survivorship/Childhood+Cancer+Survivorship
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