

New Standard of Care for Patients With Advanced Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer

Patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) who received the drug pemetrexed (Alimta) as maintenance therapy (treatment given after chemotherapy to keep the cancer from growing and spreading) lived three to five months longer than patients who did not receive the drug, according to a new study. This study also confirmed that the benefit of maintenance therapy is greater for patients with the nonsquamous type of NSCLC.

What this means for patients

“This study will change the standard of care,” said lead author Chandra P. Belani, MD, Deputy Director of the Penn State Cancer Institute. “Maintenance therapy with pemetrexed provides a new option for patients who have advanced lung cancer, because it has a low risk of side effects and can be given for a longer time to extend patients’ lives.” Pemetrexed is currently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the initial treatment of advanced nonsquamous NSCLC in combination with the drug cisplatin and as a single treatment for patients whose cancer has returned.

Although the risk of side effects was low, some patients who received pemetrexed experienced fatigue and low white blood cell counts. The side effects did not increase for patients who received pemetrexed for a longer time.

What to Ask Your Doctor

- What type and stage of lung cancer do I have?
- What is my current treatment plan?
- Do you recommend maintenance therapy?

For More Information

[Cancer.Net Guide to Lung Cancer](#) [1]

[ASCO Expert Corner: A Decision Aid Tool for Lung Cancer](#) [2]

[ASCO Answers Fact Sheet: Lung Cancer](#) [3]

[Lung Cancer Treatment Plans and Summaries](#) [4]

Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Lung+Cancer>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Expert+Information+from+ASCO/ASCO+Expert+Corner%3A+A+Decision+Aid+Tool+for+Lung+Cancer>

[3] http://www.cancer.net/sites/cancer.net/files/vignette/ASCO_Answers_Lung.pdf

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Survivorship/ASCO+Cancer+Treatment+Summaries>