

Vaccine Improves Survival for Children With High-Risk Neuroblastoma

Adding a cancer treatment vaccine to the standard treatment improved survival for children with neuroblastoma. Neuroblastoma is a type of cancer that starts in the nerve cells of infants and young children and is difficult to treat. This type of cancer vaccine is also called immunotherapy because it helps the body's immune system fight cancer.

This study showed that children who received the immunotherapy were 20% more likely to be alive or not have a recurrence (return of the cancer after treatment) after two years. The most common side effects were pain, vascular leak syndrome (a build-up of fluid in the body), and allergic reactions.

What this means for patients

“Even though we treat it with aggressive therapy, high-risk neuroblastoma often returns and most patients do not survive,” said lead author Alice Yu, MD, PhD, Professor of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at the University of California and the UCSD Moores Cancer Center in San Diego. “It is very exciting to have a new treatment option for this disease and we hope to make this immunotherapy available to more children with neuroblastoma.”

This vaccine is a new way of treating children with high-risk neuroblastoma. However, it is currently only available through clinical trials and has not yet been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). If your child has neuroblastoma, talk with his or her doctor about all treatment options, including clinical trials. Many children with cancer are treated as part of a clinical trial.

What to Ask Your Doctor

- How would you classify my child's cancer - low, intermediate, or high risk?
- What is my child's prognosis? What does this mean?
- What treatment options are available?
- What clinical trials are open to my child?

For More Information

[Listen \[1\]](#) to Dr. Alice Yu discuss this study during the May 14, 2009 presscast

[Cancer.Net Guide to Neuroblastoma \[2\]](#)

[Clinical Trials \[3\]](#)

[Cancer in Children \[4\]](#)

[Understanding Cancer Vaccines \[5\]](#)

Links:

[1] http://www.asco.org/ASCOv2/Department%20Content/Communications/Downloads/May14Presscast%20Dr_Yu.mp3

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Cancer+Types/Neuroblastoma+++Childhood>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Clinical+Trials>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/Coping/Age-Specific+Information/Cancer+in+Children>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Cancer.Net+Feature+Articles/Treatments%2C+Tests%2C+and+Procedures/Understanding+Cancer+Vaccines>