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Cancer Advances: Increasing the Duration of Chemotherapy After Surgery Found to Reduce Risk of Cancer Recurrence

From the January 15, 2003 issue of the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*Read the Study [1]Women with early stage breast cancer have several treatment options to help prevent their cancer from returning after surgery. For premenopausal women whose cancer has spread to their lymph nodes, one such treatment involves chemotherapy with a combination of the drugs epirubicin, fluorouracil, and cyclophosphamide. This combination is commonly called FEC.Although FEC is not the most commonly used treatment in the United States, it is more widely used in Europe. Now, a ten-year French study has helped researchers determine how many cycles of FEC can provide the greatest benefit after surgery.Led by Professor Pierre Fumoleau, of the Centre RenÃ© Gauducheau, IRCNA, in Nantes, France, researchers compared a treatment regimen that included six cycles of FEC against two different regimens that included only three cycles. After following the patients in the study for ten years, they found that women who received six cycles of chemotherapy were less likely to have their cancer return. The researchers also found that serious side effects were very rare.
What Does This Mean For Patients?FEC is one of several options that breast cancer patients in the United States have to reduce their risk of cancer recurrence. Other drugs, such as doxorubicin, cyclophosphamide, and paclitaxel, are widely used and have shown to be effective in clinical trials. Patients with breast cancer should speak with their doctor to decide on the treatment plan that is right for them.

Links:
[1] http://www.jco.org/cgi/content/abstract/21/2/298