

## Chemotherapy - A Lung Cancer Treatment Option

Chemotherapy is one alternative that is customarily prescribed for lung cancer. This is typically the treatment of choice for SCLC, small cell. It may also be prescribed to a patient as a follow up to surgery for patients with non-small cell.

What precisely is chemotherapy?

It's the use of drugs to fight cancer. The actual drug chosen depends on the specific cancer and it's stage. These drugs are sometimes referred to a "cytotoxins" and are drugs that are toxic to the cancer cells. They disrupt the replication of cancer cells in one form or another.

Why prescribe chemotherapy over other treatments?

Surgery and radiology both treat tumors locally, for instance, they concentrate on treating the tumor that is localized to just one area of the body. Small Cell (SCLC) is not often discovered before it's already begun to spread throughout other parts of the body. The chemotherapy drugs circulate throughout your blood, hence seeking out the cancer cells wherever they may have spread.

The spread of Small cell (SCLC) is microscopic and ordinarily does not show itself on scans until it's established itself in other organs. As a prophylactic measure, doctors may treat Small cell (SCLC) with chemotherapy assuming the tumor has already begun spreading. Chemotherapy and radiotherapy are often prescribed either before, after or concurrently with it. It's commonplace for a doctor to prescribe a course of chemotherapy after a surgery. The object of this practice is to "clean up" any cancerous cells that might have broken away from the main site and begun to spread.

Prescribing chemotherapy for non-small cell is also a possibility. Although non-small cell is not as sensitive to drugs as small cell (SCLC). The doctor may also prescribe chemotherapy for non-small cell, even though it's not as sensitive to drugs as small cell.

When prescribing chemotherapy for NSCLC, the intention is often to shrink the tumor prior to radiation or surgery. Chemotherapy may also be prescribed to help you control the symptoms. It can make you feel more comfortable while undergoing treatments. The British National Institute for Clinical Excellence conducted a study in June 2001 where they made a formal statement with regards to people suffering from advanced states of non-small cell lung cancer and that they should be considered for chemotherapy even if it's not expected to eradicate the cancer simply because it reduces the symptoms and allows the patient to have a longer and more comfortable life.

What drugs are used in chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy drugs are cytotoxic drugs and are used to fight SCLC as well as non small cell. One of the most common is Cisplatin. It's often prescribed in conjunction with other drugs that help increase its effectiveness. New drugs are being tested in open clinical trials. There are many online databases that you can check for open or enrolling trials. Ask your doctor if he/she can suggest one that you can enroll in.

Today we have over fifty different types of drugs that are used to treat the different types of cancer. Any skilled oncologist will be able to prescribe the best drugs for your specific circumstances. Just bear in mind, this doesn't mean that you should, or have to for that matter, accept all of the doctors judgments blindly. You should ask your doctor to write down the names of the different drugs so you will be able to do some fact-finding yourself to identify what type of side effects they have or any other type of concerns.

On a concluding note, don't forget to point out alternative or complementary therapies that you may be using, even if it's only a nutritional supplement. You never know when they may unexpectedly interfere with any of the drugs that have been prescribed, peculiarly the supplements that claim to boost your immune system.

While you're going through chemotherapy it's very important for you to eat healthy. Even though some foods and/or supplements might be advantageous during this treatment, it's absolutely critical that your doctor or health care professional knows what you are taking.

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### About the Author

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