



CANCERcare®

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# fact sheet

## UNDERSTANDING MATURE T-CELL LYMPHOMA

Mature T-cell lymphoma is a rare type of cancer that develops when T-cells, which help fight infection and protect your immune system, begin to divide rapidly and uncontrollably. There are many different types of mature T-cell lymphoma, so it is important to know the subtype that you have so that you can communicate with your health care team about treatment options and clinical trials.

### COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM

Your health care team may include nurses, oncology social workers, your primary care doctor, specialists and your oncologist. Don't be afraid to talk openly and share any concerns with your team, whether they are medical concerns (such as managing treatment side effects) or emotional concerns, such as feelings of sadness or anxiety. You are an important member of the team, and they need to hear from you in order to create the best plan for treating your cancer.

### TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR MATURE T-CELL LYMPHOMA

Your doctor may recommend chemotherapy as an initial treatment. For most types of mature T-cell lymphoma, patients are treated with a combination chemotherapy approach, which may include cyclophosphamide, vincristine and doxorubicin.

If your cancer returns after treatment or does not respond to treatment, your doctor may recommend other drugs. Pralatrexate (Folotyn) is the first drug approved to treat mature T-cell lymphoma that has returned or has stopped responding to treatment. There are also drugs that have been approved to treat subtypes of mature T-cell lymphoma when the cancer has come back or stopped responding

to treatment. Brentuximab vedotin (Adcetris) is approved for the treatment of anaplastic large cell lymphoma, and romidepsin (Istodax) is approved for the treatment of cutaneous T-cell lymphoma.

Your doctor may also recommend a stem cell transplant, which is a procedure that places healthy blood-forming cells (called stem cells) into your body after they have been collected, either from yourself or someone else. Because these stem cells live and divide in your bone marrow, the procedure is often called a bone marrow transplant.

### EMERGING TREATMENTS

The recent approvals of new drugs for treating mature T-cell lymphoma have been encouraging for doctors and researchers. Many patients who had previously tried other drugs have shown improvement in managing their cancer thanks to these new drugs. Now, researchers are hoping that if patients are treated with these newer drugs earlier in their treatment regimen, they may be able to achieve more positive results sooner. With this in mind, researchers have developed the next generation of clinical trials to combine these newer drugs with the standard chemotherapy drugs. There are several clinical trials currently underway and many more being planned.

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## THE ROLE OF CLINICAL TRIALS

Clinical trials play an important role in developing effective treatments for mature T-cell lymphoma. People who take part in clinical trials receive state-of-the-art care and often gain access to and benefit from new medicines which are being developed every year. If you are interested in participating in a clinical trial, talk to your health care team.

You can also find listings of clinical trials through resources such as:

- National Cancer Institute: [www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials](http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials)
- American Cancer Society's Clinical Trials Matching Service (800-303-5691 or [www.cancer.org/clinicaltrials](http://www.cancer.org/clinicaltrials)).

If you are thinking about enrolling in a clinical trial:

**Ask about how side effects might impact your quality of life.** Make sure you understand exactly what treatment is being offered and how it differs from the standard treatment available for your cancer. Ask about any potential side effects of the treatment and quality of life issues.

**Call your insurance company.** Your insurance may or may not cover expenses related to a clinical trial. Find out exactly what your insurance company will pay for. While the clinic or hospital running the trial will cover the cost of any drugs used in the study, you will need to understand what costs associated with the trial are covered and any out-of-pocket expenses you may incur.

**Learn about your rights and protections.** People who take part in clinical trials have rights and protections to make sure their privacy and well-being are maintained. All participants must sign a document stating that they have the full knowledge and understanding of the study, and of any possible risks and benefits. Participants also have the right to stop taking part in a clinical trial at any time.

## CancerCare® Can Help

Founded in 1944, CancerCare is the leading national organization providing free support services and information to help people manage the emotional, practical and financial challenges of cancer. Our comprehensive services include counseling and support groups over the phone, online and in-person, educational workshops, publications and financial and co-payment assistance. All CancerCare services are provided by professional oncology social workers.

To learn more, visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or call **800-813-HOPE (4673)**.

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