



Targeted Therapy Treatment

Take action



Talk to your doctor about getting your tumour tested to see if you are eligible for targeted therapies for lung cancer.

- Tumour testing shows if a lung cancer tumour has a certain change or mutation that is making it act abnormally.
- Targeted therapies "target" these mutations in different ways.
- Targeted lung cancer therapies are more specific and may have fewer side effects.

Lung cancer treatment that kills cancer cells can also affect normal cells. This can cause unwanted side effects. New lung cancer drugs called targeted therapies help reduce damage to healthy cells. They focus on cancer cells by interrupting their growth and how they work.

These therapies attack targets on or in the tumour cells. Not every person is offered targeted therapies for lung cancer. Your doctor might ask you to have a special test on your tumour called a molecular test or biomarker test. Talk to your doctor about your tests and treatments. Targeted therapy drugs work in different ways.

Mutations or changes can affect and distort messages around cells and sent between our cells. Therapies exist to target some of these mutations. Some of the more common targeted lung cancer therapies include:

- Epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) inhibitors
- Anti-angiogenesis therapy
- Monoclonal antibodies.

Lung cancer therapies are always changing. Talk to your doctor to find out if you are a candidate for targeted lung cancer therapies and about joining a clinical trial for targeted therapy.

Ask your doctor if you are eligible for targeted therapies to treat lung cancer.

Possible side effects of targeted cancer therapy drugs



Not every person receiving targeted cancer therapy (drugs) will get side effects. The type and severity of individual side effects can vary significantly from treatment to treatment and from patient to patient.

Possible side effects could include:

- Rash
- Diarrhoea
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Puritis - itchy skin
- Paronychia - a nail disease
- Loss of appetite
- Deranged liver functions



Possible side effects of targeted cancer therapy drugs (cont.)

- Hair thinning (rare)
- Uveitis (rare) - inflammation of the eye
- Pneumonitis (rare) - inflammation of lung tissue

Discuss your concerns and possible side effects with your doctor before you commence treatment and at regular intervals. It is also important to inform your doctor about any changes in how you feel during treatment.

Related content

[American Lung Association \(2016\) "What Are The Symptoms of Lung Cancer?"](#)

[European Lung Foundation \(2016\) "Lung Cancer"](#)

[Lung Foundation Australia \(2012\) "Better Living with Lung Cancer: A Patient Guide"](#)

About Lung Foundation New Zealand

Lung Foundation New Zealand is a non-government organisation dedicated to promoting healthy lungs and early detection of lung disease (including lung cancer, New Zealand's biggest cancer killer). The Lung Foundation is devoted to supporting people affected by lung disease and provides a voice for patients and their families.

Lung Foundation New Zealand advocates on a range of issues, including access to more effective funded treatments, an increase in research funding and a commitment to making Aotearoa a smoke free nation by 2025.

Support us

Lung Foundation New Zealand is an independent organisation and is reliant on support from fundraising events, donations and bequests. This resource has been produced as the result of generous support provided by members of the public.

If you or a member of your family would like to support our work we would love to hear from you. Together we can save lives by increasing awareness about lung health and early detection of lung disease. Please visit our website www.lungfoundation.org.nz or contact Philip Hope, CEO on (+64) 021 959 450 or philip.hope@lungfoundation.org.nz

Connect with us on Facebook - fb.me/LungFoundationNZ

Expert Review Policy: Our information was checked for accuracy and clarity by cancer specialists. This resource has been approved by Medical Director & Associate Professor of Oncology, Chris Atkinson of Christchurch; assisted by Dr Greg Frazer, Respiratory Physician, Christchurch Hospital; Catherine Smith, Clinical Nurse Specialist - Lung Cancer, Christchurch Hospital; and Anne Fraser, Oncology Nurse Practitioner, Auckland City Hospital. Lung Foundation New Zealand writes in plain English. We review our information every two years so it is kept up to date.

Thanks to the American Lung Association and the European Lung Foundation for allowing us to adapt their resources for our New Zealand readers. This information sheet is one in a series produced by Lung Foundation New Zealand on lung disease, its treatment and related issues and is correct at time of print. It is designed to be used as a guide only; it is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical treatment. Please consult your family doctor or specialist if you have further questions relating to this information.