



Understanding Immunotherapy for Mesothelioma



30+ years of helping mesothelioma patients



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MESOTHELIOMA
VETERANS CENTER

Confused about immunotherapy or where to start?
Reach a nurse now at (800) 353-0060.



Immunotherapy Explained

Mesothelioma immunotherapy is a treatment that boosts a patient's immune system to better defend against cancerous mesothelioma cells. It has proven effective in improving prognosis and enhancing the quality of life for patients. All mesothelioma cell types (epithelioid, biphasic, and sarcomatoid) may respond to immunotherapy treatments.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved nivolumab (Opdivo®) plus ipilimumab (Yervoy®) as a first-line (initial) mesothelioma treatment in October 2020.



When Is Immunotherapy Used for Mesothelioma?

- When a patient is initially diagnosed
- In combination with surgery
- If a patient is not eligible for surgery
- After other treatments have failed

Your health care team will determine if you are a suitable candidate based on factors like the type and stage of your mesothelioma, overall health, and previous treatments.



How Is Immunotherapy Administered?

Checkpoint inhibitors are the most commonly used immunotherapy drugs. They are administered intravenously (through an IV) by a health care professional in a clinic or hospital setting. Your medical team will determine the specific dosing and schedule.

Doctors most commonly prescribe these three checkpoint inhibitors:

- Pembrolizumab (Keytruda®)
- Nivolumab (Opdivo)
- Ipilimumab (Yervoy)

Types of Immunotherapies for Mesothelioma

Cancer Vaccines: Treat existing cancer or prevent its recurrence by enhancing the body's immune response against cancerous cells, unlike traditional vaccines that prevent infectious diseases.

Cytokines: A cancer treatment that uses synthetic or naturally occurring proteins called cytokines to stimulate the patient's immune system, enhancing its ability to target and destroy cancer cells.

Adoptive Cell Therapy (CAR T cell therapy): Collecting a patient's T cells, genetically modifying them to express chimeric antigen receptors (CARs) that target specific cancer antigens, and then infusing the modified T cells back into the patient's body, where they can recognize and destroy cancer cells with precision.

Checkpoint Inhibitors: Block specific proteins on immune cells to enhance the immune system's ability to target and attack cancer cells.





What Can Patients Expect?

Immunotherapy can take some time to show its effectiveness. It's not unusual for patients to experience stable disease or a gradual reduction in tumor size, rather than an immediate response.

Immunotherapy for mesothelioma may also involve:

- An increase in quality of life, with fewer potential side effects than chemotherapy
- Frequent monitoring from your health care team, which includes imaging tests and bloodwork
- Common side effects, including diarrhea, fatigue, inflammation in various parts of the body, and skin rash
- Treatment being stopped or adjusted to potentially help manage side effects if medications to alleviate specific side effects are not effective
- Enrollment in clinical trials to provide access to novel immunotherapy treatments



Immunotherapy may be expensive, but your Patient Advocate at Mesothelioma Veterans Center can locate financial assistance programs to help you pay for treatment.

Call (800) 353-0060 today. It costs nothing to speak with our team.