Maintenance therapy (including rituximab maintenance)

Maintenance therapy is used to prolong remission (time without lymphoma) after successful treatment of lymphoma.

On this page

What is maintenance therapy?

Who has maintenance therapy?

What is maintenance therapy?

Maintenance therapy is sometimes given after initial treatment has put the lymphoma into remission (no evidence of disease). It is used to make the remission last as long as possible by suppressing any lymphoma cells that can’t be detected by scans after the main treatment has finished.

Chemotherapy is sometimes used as maintenance therapy; however, immunotherapy (treatment with antibodies) is the most common type of maintenance therapy for people with lymphoma.
Who is given maintenance therapy?

**Rituximab** is an antibody therapy that is given as maintenance treatment to people with advanced low-grade non-Hodgkin lymphoma who go into remission after chemotherapy. Maintenance rituximab is given once every 2–3 months. It is currently given for a maximum period of 2 years although clinical trials are testing whether there is any benefit in maintenance treatment continuing for longer. For maintenance therapy, rituximab may be given intravenously (by injection into a vein) or subcutaneously (by injection under the skin).

There are many targeted treatments for lymphoma that are being tested to see if using them as maintenance therapy reduces the risk of the lymphoma relapsing (coming back).

Children and young people with lymphoblastic lymphoma may be given maintenance treatment with chemotherapy to prevent their lymphoma relapsing. This is a less intensive course of chemotherapy, usually given as an outpatient over a couple of years. Rituximab is not currently approved for use in children.

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References

These are some of the sources we used to prepare this information. The full list of sources is available on request. Please contact us by email at publications@lymphoma-action.org.uk or phone on 01296 619409 if you would like a copy.

Further reading

- Antibody therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Glossary
- Rituximab
- Types of lymphoma
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