Ready to start planning your care? Call us at 800-525-2225 to make an appointment.
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Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

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Give to MSK

Lentinan may help extend the survival of patients with some cancers when used with chemotherapy, but additional studies are needed.

Lentinan is a type of sugar molecule called 1,3 beta glucan that comes from the shiitake mushroom. In laboratory tests, lentinan does not kill cancer cells directly. Instead, it enhances the immune system, which may aid in slowing the growth of tumors. Lentinan also kills viruses and microbes directly in laboratory studies.

## What are the potential uses and benefits?

- To prevent and treat cancer
  Several clinical trials show that lentinan combined with chemotherapy extends survival in patients with stomach, prostate, colorectal, and liver cancers.
- To lower cholesterol
  Laboratory studies support this use, but human data are lacking.

- To stimulate the immune system
  Laboratory and a few human studies show that lentinan increases the activity of certain immune cells.
- To treat infections
  Laboratory and a few human studies show that lentinan increases the activity of certain immune cells.

## What are the side effects?

- Side effects with lentinan infusions are mainly mild, with more severe reactions (hypersensitivity reaction, back pain, leg pain, depression, fever, chills, decreased white blood cell count, and elevated liver enzymes) related to short infusion times.

Case Reports

- A single case of chest tightness was reported following administration of lentinan.
- Rash reactions from the ingestion of shiitake mushrooms that are related to lentinan content.

## What else do I need to know?

Do Not Take if:

You've had skin rash reactions from eating shiitake mushrooms.

> If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.
Lentinan - Last updated on October 20, 2023

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