



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Ukrain

This information describes the common uses of Ukrain, how it works, and its possible side effects.

Tell your healthcare providers about any dietary supplements you're taking, such as herbs, vitamins, minerals, and natural or home remedies. This will help them manage your care and keep you safe.

## What is it?

**Ukrain has not been shown to prevent or treat cancer, but may be useful as palliative care in some instances.**

Ukrain is an alkaloid extract from the plant *Chelidonium majus*, a common weed. It was developed over 20 years ago by a scientist from the Ukraine, who tested the product on patients with several different types of cancers.

In lab experiments, Ukrain appeared to kill cancer cells while leaving healthy cells alone. Other experiments suggest that Ukrain may stimulate certain aspects of the immune system, but it is uncertain if these effects could occur in humans. Two small studies suggest Ukrain may help advanced pancreatic cancer patients, but additional studies are needed to confirm effects and safety.

# What are the potential uses and benefits?

- **To prevent and treat cancer**

Two small pilot studies suggest that Ukrain may be useful in the treatment of advanced pancreatic cancer, but there were also side effects that may be related to its use. More studies are needed to confirm safety and effects.

- **To treat hepatitis**

No scientific evidence supports this use.

- **To treat HIV and AIDS**

There are no data to back this claim.

- **To stimulate the immune system**

Although lab studies suggest that Ukrain stimulates certain immune cells, human data are lacking.

# What are the side effects?

- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Drowsiness
- Excessive thirst and urination
- Fever
- Injection site soreness
- Possible tumor bleeding, as reported in a small study

# What else do I need to know?

## Special Point:

Anecdotes suggest effectiveness in humans, but adequately controlled clinical trials have not been published. Ukrain™ is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration but is available in parts of Europe and from Tijuana clinics. Although the product labeling makes claims of effectiveness and safety, none of these claims have been sufficiently proven.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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