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Squalamine may have anticancer effects, but definitive evidence is lacking.

Squalamine is a compound derived from dogfish shark tissues. Lab studies suggest it can kill bacteria and block growth of new blood vessels.

Small clinical studies suggest that squalamine is safe and well tolerated when given to patients with cancer and age-related macular degeneration. However, these studies used an injectable form, and it is unclear if oral squalamine products have the same effects. Further research is needed.

Squalamine should not be confused with squalene, an oil found in shark liver.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- To treat cancer

Small clinical studies have shown that the injectable form of squalamine is safe in patients with solid

tumors, but it is not known if it can treat cancer.

- To treat age-related macular degeneration

Small clinical studies suggest that squalamine is safe and well tolerated, but it is not known if it can be used to treat this condition.

- To treat bacterial infections

Squalamine showed antibacterial effects in lab studies, but clinical trials have not been conducted.

What are the side effects?

- Fatigue, nausea, anorexia, and liver toxicity with intravenous squalamine in a clinical study.

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.

Squalamine - Last updated on July 1, 2022

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