



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Transfer Factor

This information describes the common uses of Transfer Factor, 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?

Transfer factors have not been shown to treat or prevent cancer.

Transfer factors are a group of proteins produced by cells of the immune system. Studies in humans are limited. Some suggest that transfer factors can be used to treat herpes, infections in children, chronic fatigue syndrome, and yeast infections. Other data suggest they may boost the immune system in patients with AIDS. However, more research is needed to determine the effects of transfer factors.

What are the potential uses and benefits?

- **To treat cancer**

Evidence is lacking to support use of transfer factors for cancer treatment.

- **To treat multiple sclerosis**

Evidence is lacking to support this claim.

- **To treat AIDS**

One study showed that transfer factors increased the number of white blood cells in patients with AIDS.

- **To treat viral infections**

Small studies suggest some efficacy in treating herpes.

- **To treat liver inflammation**

Transfer factors were not effective in treating hepatitis.

- **To treat asthma**

Some studies have shown that transfer factors do not benefit patients with asthma.

- **To treat chronic fatigue syndrome**

A pilot study suggests transfer factors may have positive effects on chronic fatigue syndrome.

What are the side effects?

- Fever, tenderness, pain, swelling

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 to search our virtual library.

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