



GEMCITABINE

Review and update by Cutaneous Lymphoma Foundation's Writers Bureau

WHAT IS GEMCITABINE?

Brand Name: Gemzar®

Gemcitabine is a chemotherapy drug that interferes with cancer cell's production of DNA, the genetic material of the cell. By doing this, gemcitabine impairs the ability of cancer cells to keep growing. The drug has been used by itself and with other drugs in the treatment of many kinds of cancer including cutaneous T-cell lymphoma (CTCL).

HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

Gemcitabine is given intravenously.

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED RESULT?

Treatment with gemcitabine alone or with other treatments can improve symptoms of skin lymphoma and reduce skin lesions. Gemcitabine does not work in all patients. It is important to discuss with your physician whether this might be an appropriate therapy and what the expected results might be for your individual disease.

ARE THERE SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS TO BE AWARE OF?

Gemcitabine is chemotherapy.

WHAT ARE COMMON SIDE EFFECTS?

The following is not an exhaustive list of the possible side effects. For a complete list of possible side effects, please see the manufacturer's available information on the specific therapy.

Gemcitabine, like other chemotherapy drugs, can cause temporary decreases in blood counts that might increase the risk for infections. Gemcitabine can cause a flu-like reaction (fever, chills, achiness) within the first 24 hours of administration. Other side effects, such as nausea, constipation, diarrhea, and temporary thinning of the hair might occur.