

This packet is to educate you about the benefits and side effects of interferon therapy. This packet may have words or information you do not understand. Your doctor will explain anything you do not clearly understand. Please ask as many questions as you need to make sure you understand this information.

Your Immune System

Your immune system can see foreign cells in your body, such as viruses and bacteria. It can also see sick or cancerous cells in your body. Fighter cells are sent by the immune system to kill foreign or sick cells.

Interferon Therapy

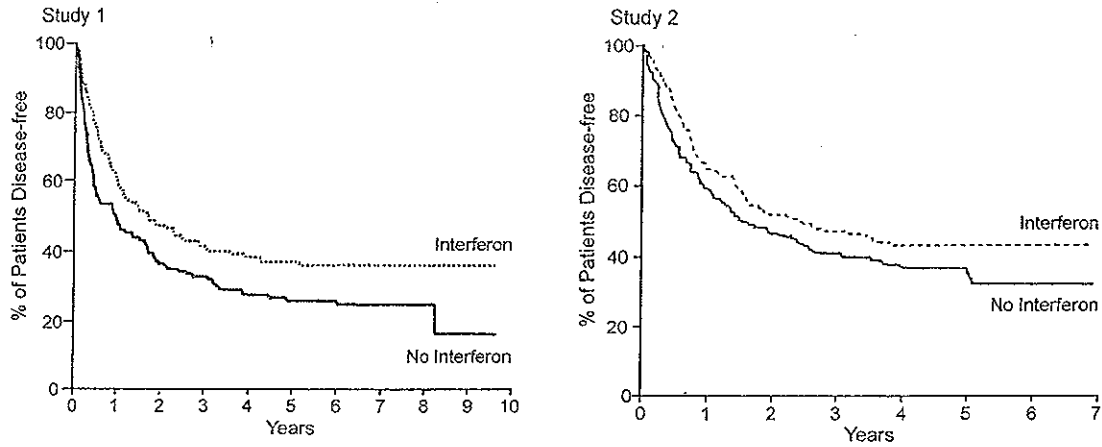
Interferon alfa-2b (IFN, INTRON® A) is a protein made by your body. It is available as a synthetic (made in the lab) drug that has effects on cancer. **This protein is the only treatment approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat your melanoma and keep it from coming back. This treatment is for patients who have stage IIB or III melanoma (thick melanoma or spread to lymph nodes).** It is not known how IFN works to treat melanoma. IFN may attack cancer cells. IFN may boost the immune system to help it fight cancer cells.

IFN must be given by needle through a vein in your arm. If you choose to take IFN, at first it will be given to you through a needle in your vein 5 days in a row each week for 4 weeks. You will then be given a shot of IFN in your skin, 3 days each week for 11 more months. You or a family member can be trained to inject the IFN at home after the first 4 weeks. These IFN shots are given like the insulin shots people with diabetes often give themselves.

Results from previous studies

Several clinical trials by the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group (ECOG) have studied the effects of IFN therapy. These trials studied patients with stage IIB and III melanoma. These studies have shown that IFN can increase the time after surgery until the melanoma comes back (disease-free survival). IFN may also lower the overall chance of the melanoma coming back. The results from two ECOG studies are shown on the next page.

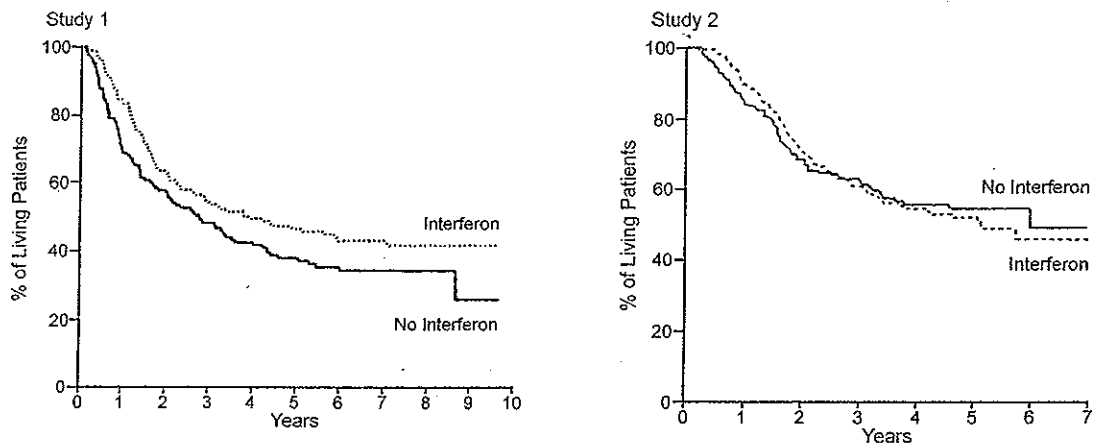
Figure 1:



Disease-free survival*

At any time, patients treated with IFN have a greater chance of being disease-free than patients who did not take IFN. When the results from these two studies are combined, this improvement has been observed in about 10% of all patients treated with IFN.

Figure 2:



Overall survival*

There was some difference in the results from these two studies. But when combined, these studies suggest that patients who take IFN may have a slightly greater chance of staying alive than patients who did not take IFN. This improvement affects 3-5% of all patients treated with IFN. However, this improvement for 3-5% of patients could be due to chance alone.

Previous clinical studies – side effects

In these studies, some patients had their dose of IFN lowered because of side effects. Also, some patients had their treatment stopped and restarted because of side effects.

About 60% of patients enrolled in one of these studies had their dose of IFN lowered or had their treatment schedule changed. In general, patients who stopped treatment stopped within the first four months. About 75% of patients stayed on therapy for the full year.

Side-effects associated with IFN therapy¹

IFN may cause mild-to-moderate side effects that make you feel like you have the flu. This means you may have some of the following symptoms:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle and joint aches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Mild depression or the blues
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Alopecia (hair loss)
- Low blood counts

When you feel like you have the flu, you:

Will spend a little more time than usual resting

May have to take over-the-counter medicine for your aches

May avoid heavy chores (like moving furniture or carrying something heavy upstairs)

May avoid strenuous leisure activities (like playing singles tennis or riding a bike at a moderate speed)

You will mostly feel this way on the days after you take your interferon. You may feel this way on weekdays during the first month of the treatment and on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays during the remaining 11 months.

Although you will feel the worst on the days after you take your IFN treatment, you may not feel like yourself on the other days as well. You will continue your IFN treatment for a year. Side effects usually lessen over time. At the end of your treatment, you will feel fine and will be able to do all of your usual activities.

You may also have severe side effects. Of all patients with severe side effects, about half will have them more than once. They usually happen in the first 6 months of treatment. They usually last several days but can last several weeks. The IFN can make you feel like you have a bad case of the flu. The IFN may severely affect your mood and your ability to think. You could have at least one, and maybe more, of the following symptoms:

- Very high fever with chills
- Feeling so tired that you spend more than half of your time in bed
- Severe muscle aches and pains requiring that you take strong medicine for pain relief
- Frequent vomiting requiring IV fluids (a needle put into your vein for fluid)
- Severe diarrhea requiring IV fluids
- Loss of appetite with significant weight loss
- Difficulty thinking or confusion
- Severe sleepiness (rarely leading to seizures)
- Moderate to suicidal depression
- Severe headache
- Low blood counts which increase the risk of infections or bleeding
- Changes in your liver

During the first clinical trial, two patients died due to liver failure. But death from liver failure has not been a problem when patients are watched for side effects. All of your side effects will be carefully watched by our doctors and nurses. Your side effects can be helped by lowering your dose of IFN and by taking other medications. If your side effects are serious, you may need to be put in the hospital. These side effects should go away once IFN therapy is over.

Patient Preferences – length and quality of life¹¹

A study was performed to find out how patients feel about the toxicity of IFN treatment. Patients were asked questions about their melanoma coming back and the side effects of IFN. The results suggested patients would take IFN therapy with severe side effects to keep their melanoma from coming back. Patients want to stay disease-free. These results represent the feelings of about 100 patients. However, individual patients differ greatly in how they feel about treatment with IFN.

IFN treatment is very toxic. You may want to have surgery alone or you may want to enroll in a clinical trial.

If you choose surgery alone, you should know:

In one trial, half of the patients who did not take IFN had their melanoma come back within one year. The other half of the patients who did not take IFN did not have their melanoma come back within one year.

If you enroll in a clinical trial, you should know that the drugs given to you in a clinical trial:

1. are experimental
2. are not approved by the FDA except for use in a clinical trial
3. have no known benefit
4. may have unpleasant side effects
5. may expose you to unknown risks

If your insurance company does not cover IFN (INTRON[®] A) therapy or if you do not have insurance, you may call Schering-Plough (the manufacturer) at 1-800-521-7157 for more information about their support plan. More information on IFN therapy is available, and will be provided to you upon request. If you have any questions, please contact your doctor:

Doctor: _____

Phone: _____

Also, you may want to contact the American Cancer Society (ACS) at 1-800-ACS-2345.

Data and wording from the Schering-Plough web site, the FDA, the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group, and publications by Dr. John M. Kirkwood and Dr. Kerry Kilbridge were used to create this information packet. *Graphs were adapted with the permission of LWW

Publishing from the following publications:

Kirkwood, John M., et al. *Interferon Alfa-2b Adjuvant Therapy of High-Risk Resected Cutaneous Melanoma: the Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group Trial EST1684*. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, 14 (1): 7-17.

Kirkwood, John M., et al. *High- and Low-Dose Interferon Alfa-2b in High-Risk Melanoma: First Analysis of Intergroup Trial E1690/S9111/C9190, 2000*. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, 18 (2): 2444-2458.

Wording from:

Kilbridge, Kerry L., et al. *Patient Preferences for Adjuvant Interferon Alfa-2b Treatment*. 2001. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, 19 (3): 812-823.

I have read the above information. I have been offered an opportunity to ask questions and have received answers that fully satisfy those questions

You will receive a signed copy of this form to keep.

Please check **true or false** in response to the following statements regarding IFN therapy.

1. IFN therapy is the only FDA approved treatment to keep melanoma from coming back in patients with stage IIB or III melanoma.
 True False
2. IFN therapy can lower the overall chance of your melanoma coming back.
 True False
3. IFN therapy is given over one year. The side effects of IFN include flu-like symptoms, liver damage, depression, and low blood counts.
 True False
4. Side effects of IFN can be helped in most people by lowering their dose of IFN and by taking other medications.
 True False

PARTICIPANT
(SIGNATURE)

PARTICIPANT
(PRINT)

DATE

TIME

I have been involved in the education of this patient and witness here the answers given to the questions above are correct.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Print Name

OR

I have been involved in the education of this patient. The answers given to the questions above are incorrect. I have re-reviewed this information with the patient who now understands this material.

Signature of Investigator

Date

Print Name