



Intravenous Alpha Lipoic Acid in Cancer Care: Patient Resource

What is alpha lipoic acid (ALA)?

ALA is an antioxidant. Although the body produces it in small amounts, it is mainly obtained from food or supplements. ALA can also be administered intravenously (IV).

What is intravenous (IV) ALA used for?

IV ALA has been prescribed to:

- Support quality of life
- Reduce the severity of cancer treatment-related side effects, such as peripheral neuropathy
- Improve treatment outcomes or slow cancer progression

However, not all of these claims are scientifically proven, and ALA is not to be used as a cure for cancer. ALA should not be considered an alternative for chemotherapy or any other cancer treatments.

Does IV ALA work?

Only seven studies reporting on 46 patients have looked at IV ALA for cancer care. Most included advanced cancer patients and the majority of studies were case reports or case series. IV ALA may improve chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy in patients with cancer. However, more research is needed for neuropathy and other uses.

How does IV ALA work?

As an antioxidant, ALA works to protect our

bodies from oxidative damage. Many cancer treatments cause oxidative stress; ALA may have a protective role here. Additionally, ALA helps regulate glucose and insulin, which may help treat and prevent peripheral neuropathy. There are also a handful of cell studies suggesting anticancer effects.

Is ALA safe?

Safety data is limited in people with cancer; however, IV ALA is considered safe and well tolerated in other conditions.

Due to theoretical interactions and a lack of evidence, IV ALA should be used with caution alongside chemotherapy, radiotherapy, in patients with thyroid disease and in patients on anti-diabetic medications.

Please contact your healthcare provider to discuss whether you are a good candidate for IV ALA therapy.

What are the side effects of IV ALA?

Local pain during infusion and redness are common. No serious adverse effects have been reported. The most common side effect is stomach upset. A full list of reported side effects can be found in our health care provider monograph.

What is the recommended dose, frequency, and length of use of IV ALA?

The most frequently used dose range is 300-600 mg given 1-2 times per week, for 3-5 weeks.

Some case studies report using IV ALA for more than 12 months.

Where can I get more information?

For more detailed information including references you can read the companion healthcare professional version on the [CCNM research website](#). You can also consult with a health care provider such as a naturopathic doctor, medical doctor, or nurse practitioner who is experienced in the use of IV ALA.

Disclaimer

This monograph provides a summary of available evidence and neither advocates for nor against the use of a particular therapy. Every effort is made to ensure the information included in this monograph is accurate at the time it is published. Prior to using a new therapy or product, always consult a licensed health care provider. The information in this monograph should not be interpreted as medical advice nor should it replace the advice of a qualified health care provider.