



UNC
KIDNEY CENTER

Podcast Transcript:

Dr. Ron Falk

ANCA Vasculitis Treatments

“ANCA Treatments: Risk for Anemia”

Patient: Can taking these drugs cause anemia?

Dr. Falk: All of these drugs—cyclophosphamide, mycophenolate mofetil, CellCept, Imuran, all pressure the bone marrow. And by pressure, I mean can affect any number of cells within the bone marrow, including cells that become blood cells, cells that become white blood cells, cells that become platelets. That part of your circulating cell that stops you from bleeding is a platelet. So, cyclophosphamide therapy, mycophenolate mofetil therapy and azathioprine all can cause anemia. To a certain extent, what you'd like to see is that the dose of drug is decreased as long as one can remain in remission. But there are ways of boosting the bone marrow to produce more red blood cells. There are drugs that are called erythrocytes stimulating agents, the erythropoietin drugs, can be used. Many of these immunosuppressive drugs cause anemia. The first goal is to decrease the dose, if at all possible. And then to use erythropoietin drugs, if needed.