What is DCA?

Dichloroacetate (DCA) is a medication which is sometimes used “off-label” for cancer. This means the drug is not approved for use in cancer. DCA has been used in medicine for other conditions, mostly for rare mitochondrial diseases.

What is DCA used for?

DCA has been prescribed to reduce tumour size, stabilize disease, improve survival, and reduce cancer related symptoms. DCA is an experimental treatment. DCA should not be considered an alternative to chemotherapy or other approved cancer treatments.

Does DCA work?

Only a handful of small studies and case reports have looked at DCA as a treatment for cancer. Some clinical trials reported reduction or stability in tumour size with the use of DCA, but not all patients responded to the treatment. The only randomized controlled trial was in patients with advanced head and neck cancer. This study found that although more people treated with DCA responded well to their cancer treatment (I.e., tumors shrunk), there was no difference in how long people lived compared to people who did not receive DCA. Several case reports demonstrated tumor shrinking and long-term survival in patients with advanced cancer, which is encouraging. However, larger

inhibiting an enzyme called pyruvate dehydrogenase kinase. In doing this, DCA may promote cancer cell death.

Is DCA safe?

DCA is generally safe, but there are times when DCA should not be used. It should not be used in pregnant or lactating women. DCA should be used cautiously in people with liver disease or when taking medications that may damage the liver. It should be used cautiously with other medications that have neurological effects such as benzodiazepines. Theoretically, the use of DCA could increase the risk of tumor lysis syndrome in people undergoing other cancer treatments due to increased cancer cell death.

What are the side effects of DCA?

The most common side effect is peripheral