

# Advances in TARGETED CANCER THERAPIES

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## REVIEWS & REPORTS

### New Uses and Warning for Imatinib

*Reviewed by Nicholas J. Vogelzang, MD*

Early in November 2006, the US Food and Drug Administration approved the use of imatinib for 5 additional diseases:

- Dermatofibrosarcoma protuberans
- Philadelphia chromosome-positive acute lymphoblastic leukemia
- Certain forms of myelodysplastic syndrome and myeloproliferative disorders
- Hypereosinophilic syndrome/chronic eosinophilic leukemia
- Aggressive systemic mastocytosis

Imatinib previously has been approved for use in patients with chronic myelogenous leukemia and gastrointestinal stromal tumor.

In a recent communication to physicians, the manufacturer of imatinib and the FDA warned that the drug may be linked to the development of congestive heart failure. At risk are older patients with pre-existing medical conditions and risk factors for cardiac disease. Patients should be monitored for signs of congestive heart failure, which can include shortness of breath, persistent cough or wheezing, and fluid retention that may cause swelling of the abdomen or legs. Other symptoms are fatigue, lack of appetite, nausea, confusion, and increased heart rate.

Imatinib (Gleevec®) is available from Novartis Oncology. Additional information can be found at [www.gleevec.com/index.jsp](http://www.gleevec.com/index.jsp). ■