

A Go-To Guy's Insights on Precision Medicine for Lung Cancer

An interview with Matthew Reiss, PhD, manager of precision medicine and navigation at GO2 for Lung Cancer, who notes: "Cancer is not one disease but several separate diseases."

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What are GO2 for Lung Cancer and LungMATCH?

GO2 for Lung Cancer is a nonprofit that supports people with lung cancer through multiple avenues. LungMATCH is part of that. It's a one-on-one conversation with individuals who care about you, your needs and your questions and who take the time to make sure that you have the answers and information that you need. We focus on three pillars: biomarker analysis, clinical trial matching and precision medicine. We talk through a person's biomarker report and make sure they understand it and whether the results mean they're eligible for targeted therapy.

What is precision medicine?

Cancer is not one disease but several separate diseases that each have their unique genetic components that make each individual respond differently to different treatments as well as to the cancer itself. There are certain genes within a tumor that drive the cancer to continue growing. And for some of those genes, there are drugs that specifically target them. This approach treats the cancer cells as opposed to the entire body. Generally, this comes with fewer side effects.

Precision medicine usually starts with a genomic profile, an analysis of a tumor's genetic makeup [to see whether the person's cancer has gene variations that can be treated with targeted therapy]. We want to get people not only the most effective treatment but also a treatment that suits their lifestyle.

How would you describe your role at the organization?

I make sure that people have the education they need as well as the resources to understand what treatments are available to them. And I may match them with clinical trials if they're interested in that. But then, we go beyond that. There's a division called Patient Services that really specializes in the support and guidance that individuals need outside of the treatments.

What makes GO2 for Lung Cancer different from a patient's health care team?

Wonderful resources are available through health care teams. But we are not bound by a 15- to 20-minute appointment window. I've talked to people on the phone for 10 minutes because they were just looking for some basic information. And I've talked to people for an hour or multiple times over the course of months. We will go back and forth with individuals and answer pretty much any question. And all LungMATCH services are free. If someone's interested, a great place to start would be our email HelpLine, support@go2.org, or by calling 800-298-2436.

What inspires your work?

I had an opportunity to fulfill this role for someone I cared about. I learned that it's really difficult to navigate all the information out there. Going through that process was eye-opening but also really rewarding. I felt like I was able to contribute to making sure they had all the information in front of them and could weigh what's important to them. So it was really exciting for me to come across this position when I was job searching because it takes the human aspect of medicine that I've always loved and puts it together with the science that I find really interesting.

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<http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/article/goto-precision-medicine-go2-lung-cancer-matthew-reiss>