

Areva to begin US trial of cancer-fighting isotope

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A subsidiary of the French nuclear giant Areva said Monday it had received US clearance to begin a clinical trial of an isotope that targets cancer cells.

"Lead-212 is a rare radioactive isotope that lies at the heart of promising nuclear medical research to develop new cancer treatments," Areva Med said in a statement.

"This innovative approach, known as alpha radio-immunotherapy, specifically pinpoints and destroys [cancer cells](#) while limiting [toxicity](#) to healthy cells."

The phase one trial, which assesses safety, will begin in 2011 and take about two years. The treatment's primary target will be pancreatic cancer, a company spokesman said.

"This landmark FDA authorization is a very important step that could lead to a potential treatment for very aggressive and lethal cancers," said Jacques Besnainou, CEO of Areva North America.

A [Food and Drug Administration](#) spokeswoman declined to elaborate on the authorization, saying the agency does not comment on [clinical trials](#) that are under way or about to begin.

Areva announced last year the construction of a facility to produce lead-212 in the Limousin region of France.

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