

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

# Leukemia

### What is leukemia?

Leukemia is cancer that forms in blood cells, and bone marrow. In most cases, leukemia forms in white blood cells, which help the body fight infection. Over time, these cancerous blood cells divide, crowding out healthy cells, making it difficult to get oxygen to the blood, fight infection and control bleeding.

### **LEUKEMIA BY THE NUMBERS**



# A Closer Look



# Types of Leukemia

Chronic vs. acute



#### Chronic leukemia

advances slowly and may not exhibit symptoms in early stages. Some patients may not even know they have chronic leukemia until they get a blood test.

#### **COMMON TYPES OF CHRONIC LEUKEMIA**

Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) is a slow-growing cancer that begins in immune cells called lymphocytes. These cells develop in bone marrow, but eventually travel into the blood. CLL develops when too many abnormal lymphocytes grow, crowding out normal blood cells. Chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) is associated with an abnormal chromosome known as the Philadelphia chromosome, in which pieces of two chromosomes break off and trade places, forming a defective gene. Also known as chronic myelogenous leukemia



#### Acute leukemia

develops rapidly and may cause a sudden onset of symptoms. This type of leukemia often requires immediate and aggressive treatment.

#### **COMMON TYPES OF ACUTE LEUKEMIA**

Acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) develops when abnormal white blood cells accumulate in the bone marrow. These cells divide rapidly, replacing healthy cells and, in some cases, invade healthy organs.

Also known as acute lymphoblastic leukemia and acute lymphoid leukemia Acute myeloid leukemia (AML), the most common type of acute leukemia in adults, occurs when the bone marrow makes immature blood cells called myeloblasts.

Also known as acute myelogenous leukemia, acute myeloblastic leukemia, acute granulocytic leukemia or acute nonlymphocytic leukemia

### Leukemia vs. Lymphoma

Lymphoma and leukemia, often called liquid cancers or blood cancers, share a common origin—lymphocytes, or white blood cells of the immune system.

**Leukemia** is cancer of the blood cells that usually starts in bone marrow and often travels through the bloodstream.

BONE MARROW



**Lymphoma** is cancer of the lymphatic system that usually originates in lymph nodes or, sometimes, the spleen.

LYMPH NODES

Some liquid cancers may be considered either leukemia or lymphoma, depending on where they originate.

For instance: Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) and small lymphocytic lymphoma (SLL) affect the same kind of cells — *small lymphocytes* — and are often considered different versions of the same disease.

### **Risk Factors**

Not all risk factors for leukemia are known, and those that are may vary depending on the type of leukemia.

#### COMMON RISK FACTORS FOR SOME TYPES OF LEUKEMIA INCLUDE:



#### **TREATMENTS**



SYNDROMES



LEUKEMIA IN THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY (parents or siblings)

- Weakitess
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Night sweats
- or bleeding
- Frequent nosebleeds
- Red patches on the skin

## **Treatment Options**





For more information, visit cancercenter.com

**SOURCES** National Cancer Institute, American Cancer Society