

About Leukemia

Leukemia is cancer that starts in the tissue that forms blood. White blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets are made from stem cells as the body needs them. When cells grow old or get damaged, they die, and new cells take their place. In a person with leukemia, the bone marrow makes abnormal white blood cells. The abnormal cells are leukemia cells. Unlike normal blood cells, leukemia cells don't die when they should. They may crowd out normal white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. This makes it hard for normal blood cells to do their work

Estimated new cases and deaths from leukemia
in the United States in 2017

New cases: 62,130

Deaths: 24,500

Leukemia represents 4.1% of all cancer deaths in the U.S.

Risk factors:

- Radiation - People exposed to very high levels of radiation.
- Smoking - Smoking cigarettes increases the risk of acute myeloid leukemia
- Benzene - Exposure to benzene in the workplace can cause acute myeloid leukemia. Benzene is used widely in the chemical industry. It's also found in cigarette smoke and gasoline
- Chemotherapy - Cancer patients treated with certain types of cancer-fighting drugs sometimes later get acute myeloid leukemia or acute lymphocytic leukemia.
- Down syndrome and certain other inherited diseases
- Myelodysplastic syndrome and certain other blood disorders
- Human T-cell leukemia virus type I (HTLV-I)
- Family history of leukemia - It's rare for more than one person in a family to have leukemia.

Symptoms:

- Swollen lymph nodes that usually don't hurt (especially lymph nodes in the neck or armpit)
- Fevers or night sweats
- Frequent infections
- Feeling weak or tired
- Bleeding and bruising easily (bleeding gums, purplish patches in the skin, or tiny red spots under the skin)
- Swelling or discomfort in the abdomen (from a swollen spleen or liver)
- Weight loss for no known reason
- Pain in the bones or joints

Most often, these symptoms are not due to cancer. An infection or other health problems may also cause these symptoms. Only a doctor can tell for sure.

Treatment:

- Watchful Waiting
- Chemotherapy
- Targeted Therapy
- Biological Therapy
- Radiation Therapy
- Stem Cell Transplant