



About us

The Leukaemia Foundation is the only national not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the care and cure of patients and families living with leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma and related blood disorders.

We invest millions of dollars in the work of Australia's leading researchers to develop better treatments and cures and provide free services to support patients and their families.

We receive no ongoing government funding. We rely on the generosity of the community and corporate sector to further our Vision to Cure and Mission to Care.

We can help you

Our range of free services supports thousands of Australians, from diagnosis, through treatment and beyond. To learn more, please call 1800 620 420 to speak with one of our Support Services team.

You can help us

There are many ways that you can help us to improve the quality of life for people with blood cancer. From making a donation, to signing up for an event; from volunteering, or joining us as a corporate sponsor - please call 1800 500 088 or go to www.leukaemia.org.au to learn more.

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Follicular lymphoma is a B-cell lymphoma characterised by tumour cells that appear in a circular or clump-like pattern under the microscope.

These irregular shaped follicles replace the normal structure of a lymph node. Over 90% of people with follicular lymphoma have a protein called CD20 on the surface of the cancerous follicular cells. This protein is a target for some kinds of treatment. Follicular lymphoma is the most common subtype of low grade (indolent) lymphoma, making up 20-30% of all non-Hodgkin lymphomas.

How does Follicular lymphoma affect the body?

Follicular lymphoma tends to behave like a chronic condition with people experiencing long periods of relatively good health. It tends to grow slowly in most cases and by the time symptoms develop, 80%-85% of people are diagnosed with stage 3 or 4 follicular lymphoma. The most common first sign of follicular lymphoma is a painless swelling in the lymph nodes of the neck, armpit or groin. Other symptoms may include loss of appetite and tiredness, shortness of breath and generalised unexplained aches and pains. At the time of diagnosis, most people usually have tumours in many parts of the body and follicular lymphoma can sometimes transform into a more aggressive form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma, usually diffuse large B-cell lymphoma. Occasionally follicular lymphoma can occur outside of the lymph nodes (e.g. the skin), and this is called extranodal follicular lymphoma.

Who does Follicular lymphoma commonly affect?

Follicular lymphoma typically affects people aged over 50, with the average age at diagnosis being 60 years. Most people with follicular lymphoma are aged over 65 and it is slightly more common in men than in women.

Do we know what causes Follicular lymphoma?

The causes of follicular lymphoma are unknown. It is not due to infection and cannot be passed on to other people.

How is Follicular lymphoma treated?

Treatment for follicular lymphoma depends on the individual situation. If it is localised to one area, local radiotherapy may be given. When follicular lymphoma is at an early stage and/or the person is symptom-free, the 'watch and wait' approach is usually taken which involves close monitoring by the specialist, with active treatments such as chemotherapy being deferred. Once symptoms develop or if the follicular lymphoma is progressing, radiation therapy or chemotherapy is used to treat the disease. Chemotherapy may be a single agent such as bendamustine or chlorambucil in combination with rituximab, or combination chemotherapy such as cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, vincristine and prednisolone known collectively as CHOP. The monoclonal antibody drug rituximab is occasionally used on its own, but mostly in combination with chemotherapy. Radioimmunotherapy such as radiolabelled rituximab, may also be used. Some people with advanced follicular lymphoma may eventually have a stem cell transplant using either their own stem cells (autologous) or stem cells from a donor (allogeneic).

The Leukaemia Foundation publishes the guides: 'Understanding Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma. A guide for patients & families'; 'Understanding Autologous Transplants' and 'Understanding Allogeneic Transplants'.

For more information, freecall 1800 620 420
email info@leukaemia.org.au or visit www.leukaemia.org.au