

FACT SHEET

Lymphoblastic Lymphoma



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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Lymphoblastic lymphoma is an aggressive form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma. It is relatively rare, accounting for approximately 2% of all non-Hodgkin lymphomas.

Lymphoblastic lymphoma usually develops from T-lymphocytes but occasionally develops from B-lymphocytes. Clinically, lymphoblastic lymphoma behaves very similarly to acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL), and the two conditions are often treated in similar ways. In lymphoblastic lymphoma, the abnormal lymphocytes are present in the lymph nodes or thymus gland, whereas in ALL, the abnormal lymphocytes are mainly in the blood and bone marrow.

How does Lymphoblastic lymphoma affect the body?

People usually present with painless swelling in the neck, armpit or groin. This is caused by enlarged lymph nodes. In 50-75% of people a central inner chest lump (mediastinal mass) occurs which may cause difficulty breathing (dyspnoea) and chest pain. Other areas of the body that can be affected include the thymus gland, liver, spleen, skin, testes and brain. Fatigue, loss of appetite and weight loss often occur; in addition to drenching night sweats and unexplained fevers.

Who does Lymphoblastic lymphoma commonly affect?

Lymphoblastic lymphoma is very rare in adults, most commonly affecting people under the age of 35. It is much more prevalent in children and teenagers, with the most common age at diagnosis being 20 years. It is slightly more common in men than it is in women.

Do we know what causes Lymphoblastic lymphoma?

Whilst the exact causes of lymphoblastic lymphoma are unknown, factors such as exposure to radiation or pesticides, and congenital or acquired immunosuppression have been associated with an increased risk of developing lymphoblastic lymphoma.

How is Lymphoblastic lymphoma treated?

Intensive chemotherapy is the main treatment for lymphoblastic lymphoma. Chemotherapy treatment is usually divided into three phases: induction, consolidation and maintenance. Chemotherapy may be given directly into the cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord (intrathecal chemotherapy). Radiotherapy may also be given to the brain and spine if lymphoma cells are present in the cerebrospinal fluid; and/or to the chest or other areas if there is a large mass present. Some people are offered a stem cell transplant using cells from a donor (allogeneic transplant), or sometimes with their own cells (autologous transplant). Prompt treatment with chemotherapy generally produces an excellent response for lymphoblastic lymphoma, however relapse is relatively common. New treatments are being researched all the time and people may be invited by their doctor to take part in a clinical trial to compare a new treatment against the best available standard treatment.

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