



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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Primary central nervous system lymphoma is an uncommon form of extranodal non-Hodgkin lymphoma where malignant cells form in the lymph tissue of the brain and/or spinal cord.

The most common site for primary central nervous system (CNS) lymphoma is the brain. There may be more than one tumour present, although 60- 70% of cases have a single tumour. Primary CNS lymphoma may also start in the layers that form the outer covering of the brain (meninges) or in the eyes (ocular lymphoma).

How does Primary CNS lymphoma affect the body?

The main symptoms arise from increased pressure within the skull (raised intracranial pressure). A blockage within the fluid-filled spaces in the brain can occur causing cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) to build-up, which causes raised intracranial pressure. The tumour itself may also be the cause of increased pressure. Raised intracranial pressure can cause headaches, nausea and vomiting and disturbances to vision. Other symptoms may include seizures, confusion, changes in behaviour and in personality. Weakness or paralysis of one side of the body may also occur as a result of a tumour on one side of the brain.

Who does Primary CNS lymphoma commonly affect?

It is most common in people aged in their 50s and 60s, but can occur at any age.

Do we know what causes Primary CNS lymphoma?

Whilst the exact causes of primary CNS lymphoma are unknown, a weakened immune system such as in people who have HIV/AIDS, or have had an organ transplant are at increased risk of developing this form of lymphoma, however the incidence in people with a normal immune system is rising significantly.

How is Primary CNS lymphoma treated?

Treatment for primary CNS lymphoma includes chemotherapy and often radiation therapy. Steroid therapy (e.g. dexamethasone) is often given before chemotherapy, as this helps reduce the swelling around the tumour, and may even shrink the tumour, reducing the raised intracranial pressure. Chemotherapy is given into a vein, and often also into the fluid surrounding the brain (intrathecally). Methotrexate is the drug most commonly given this way, and is also given in high doses intravenously - either on its own or in combination with other chemotherapy drugs and/or steroids. Radiotherapy uses high-energy rays to destroy the cancerous cells and can be an effective treatment for primary CNS lymphoma in younger people. It is used in combination with chemotherapy and steroid treatment. Surgery is only used to provide diagnostic tissue, and is never curative alone. Anticonvulsants may be given if seizures occur as a result of a tumour. If treatment is insufficient or if the disease recurs, some people are given a stem cell transplant using either their own stem cells (autologous) or those from a donor (allogeneic). 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 or strategy with 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