

+ What is Leukemia?

Leukemia death rates have been falling steadily by around 1.8% annually.

1. Introduction

Leukemia, a common type of blood cancer, occurs when DNA damage in white blood cells creates new cancerous leukemia cells, which begin to grow uncontrollably. This negatively impacts the body's ability to produce red blood cells and platelets while weakening its ability to combat infections.

Patients with this cancer may be prone to bruising or bleeding easily, frequent infections, and anemia. These symptoms can occur alongside others, such as bone pain or weight loss.

2. Types & Subtypes

Leukemia is classified into two main types based on whether the cancer grows quickly (acute) or slowly (chronic). These are further categorized into separate subtypes:

- + Acute lymphoblastic leukemia
- + Acute myelogenous leukemia
- + Chronic lymphocytic leukemia
- + Chronic myelogenous leukemia
- + Chronic myelomonocytic leukemia
- + Hairy cell leukemia
- + Large granular lymphocytic leukemia

3. Risk Factors

Though it's still unknown what exactly causes leukemia, several factors may increase the risk of developing it:

- + Age (under 15 or over 60)
- + Exposure to some chemicals
- + Very high doses of radiation
- + Previous chemotherapy or radiation treatments
- + Family history
- + Some genetic disorders

Since the causes are yet unknown, prevention focuses on limiting exposure to these known risk factors as well as understanding the patient's genetics and family history to catch leukemia early if it develops.

4. Treatment

After being diagnosed with leukemia, treatments available to patients are based on the type of cancer and their age. Many treatments include chemotherapy, biological therapy, radiation therapy, and stem cell transplants. Acute leukemias are typically treated with chemotherapy or more aggressive methods to target the fast-dividing cells. Slower chronic leukemias can be treated with other, more targeted therapies.

Did you know?

Most patients with leukemia are either under the age of 15 or over age 60.

For more information on leukemia, please visit the [National Cancer Institute](https://www.nationalcancer.org/).

References:

Overview of leukemia: [Medical News Today](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/leukemia)

Leukemia types & subtypes: [Cleveland Clinic](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17169-leukemia)

Risk factors for developing leukemia: [Blood Cancer United](https://www.bloodcancerunited.org/risk-factors)

Leukemia treatments & patient resources: [American Society of Hematology](https://www.asco.org/leukemia)

Leukemia statistics and resources for medical professionals: [National Cancer Institute](https://www.nationalcancer.org/leukemia)