
A - Z of Leukaemia

**A Guide for
Patients**

Leukaemia Care
YOUR Blood Cancer Charity

Introduction

During your blood cancer journey, you will come across a number of medical terms. Some words which you may have heard before and some which you may not. This booklet helps to define some of those.

You may be feeling unsure or confused about blood cancer, whatever stage of your journey you are at, and so it is important to understand the information you are being told. It may be useful to take this booklet with you to your appointments.

If you are unsure about any more medical terms, speak to your specialist nurse who will be able to explain things in more depth.

Booklet written by Shirley Aston, and reviewed by Victoria Grandage. Thank you to Thea Wilson for providing valuable feedback as a patient reviewer.

If you would like any information on the sources used for this booklet, please email communications@leukaemiacare.org.uk for a list of references.

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About Leukaemia Care

Leukaemia Care is a national charity dedicated to ensuring that people affected by blood cancer have access to the right information, advice and support.

Our services

Helpline

Our helpline is available 9.00am - 10.00pm on weekdays and 9.30am - 12.30pm on Saturdays. If you need someone to talk to, call **08088 010 444**.

Nurse service

We have two trained nurses on hand to answer your questions and offer advice and support, whether it be through emailing **nurse@leukaemicare.org.uk**, over the phone on **08088 010 444** or via LiveChat.

Patient Information Booklets

We have a number of patient information booklets like this available to anyone who has been affected by a blood cancer. A full list of titles – both disease specific and general information titles – can be found on our

website at **www.leukaemicare.org.uk/resources/filter-by-resource-type/information-booklets**

Support Groups

Our nationwide support groups are a chance to meet and talk to other people who are going through a similar experience. For more information about a support group local to your area, go to **www.leukaemicare.org.uk/our-support-groups**

Buddy Support

We offer one-to-one phone support with volunteers who have had blood cancer themselves or been affected by it in some way. You can speak to someone who knows what you are going through. For more information on how to get a buddy call **08088 010 444** or email **care@leukaemicare.org.uk**

Online Forum

Our online forum, www.healthunlocked.com/leukaemia-care, is a place for people to ask questions anonymously or to join in the discussion with other people in a similar situation.

Patient and carer conferences

Our nationwide conferences provide an opportunity to ask questions and listen to patient speakers and medical professionals who can provide valuable information and support.

Website

You can access up-to-date information on our website, www.leukaemicare.org.uk, as well as speak to one of our care advisers on our online support service, LiveChat (9am-5pm weekdays).

Campaigning and Advocacy

Leukaemia Care is involved in campaigning for patient well-being, NHS funding and drug and treatment availability. If you would like an update on any of the work we are currently doing or want to know how to get involved, email advocacy@leukaemicare.org.uk

Journey magazine

Our quarterly magazine includes inspirational patient and carer stories as well as informative articles by medical professionals. To subscribe go to www.leukaemicare.org.uk/resources/subscribe-to-journey-magazine

Glossary

All words in **red** are the terms you may come across during your blood cancer journey. All words in **green** are how to say them.

A

Acute Leukaemia

a-cute leu.kae.mia

Leukaemia is cancer of the white blood cells. Acute leukaemia means it progresses rapidly and aggressively, and usually requires immediate treatment.

Anaemia

anae.mia

A medical condition in which the red blood cell count or haemoglobin is less than normal.

Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL)

a-cute lym.pho.blast-ic leu.kae.mia

Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL) is a cancer of the white blood cells that would become lymphocytes. Normal white blood cells divide and grow in an orderly and controlled way, however, in leukaemia this process is disrupted. This means signals

that stop the body making too many cells are ignored. Cells continue to divide but do not mature into normal lymphocytes (white blood cells).

Allogenic stem cell transplant

all.o.gen.ic

Stem cells are collected from a matching donor and transplanted into the patient to suppress the disease and restore the patient's immune system.

Alopecia

al.o.pe.cia

Hair loss.



Antibiotics

an.ti.biot-ics

These are used to treat or prevent bacterial infections. They work by killing bacteria or preventing them from reproducing and spreading.

Anti-bodies

an.ti.bodies

A blood protein produced in response to and counteracting a specific antigen. Antibodies combine with substances which they recognise as alien, such as bacteria, viruses and foreign substances in the blood.

Anti-fungal

an.ti.fung.al

A medication that limits or prevents growth of yeasts and other fungal organisms.

Antigen

an.ti.gen

A toxin or other foreign substance which induces an immune response in the body, especially the production of antibodies.

Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML)

a-cute my.e.loid leu.kae.mia

Acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) is a type of blood cancer that starts from young white blood cells called granulocytes or monocytes in the bone marrow.

Acute Promyelocytic Leukaemia (APML)

a-cute pro.my.e.lo.cyt-ic leu.kae.mia

Acute Promyelocytic Leukaemia (APML) is a subtype of Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML). APML is most commonly associated with

chromosomes 15 and 17 swapping over. This causes parts from each of these chromosomes to "join" and create a gene called PML/RARA.

Aplasia

[apla.sia](#)

The incomplete or defective development of the usual regenerative process of blood production. This leads to an empty bone marrow and maybe caused by an infection.

Arsenic Trioxide (ATO)

[ars.en.ic tri.ox.ide](#)

Arsenic trioxide is a chemotherapy drug and is also called Trisenox or ATO. It is a treatment for a type of acute myeloid leukaemia called acute promyelocytic leukaemia (APL).

All-trans Retinoic Acid (ATRA)

[all.trans retin.o.ic a-cid](#)

All-trans retinoic acid, is a drug for the treatment of APL. It is based on Vitamin A and is not a chemotherapy drug but users may experience some side effects including headaches, nausea, dry skin and mouth, bone pain and dry eyes.

Alternative therapies

[al.tern.a.tive ther.a.pies](#)

These are treatments used instead of conventional western medicine. For example, acupuncture is a type of alternative therapy.

Auto Immune Disease

A condition arising from an abnormal immune response to a

normal body part. Your immune system attacks healthy cells in your body by mistake.

Autologous stem cell transplants

[au.tol.o.gous](#)

A patient's own blood forming cells are collected and returned to the patient following high dose chemotherapy.

B

BCR-ABL gene

A fusion gene that is formed when the ABL gene on chromosome 9 and the BCR gene on chromosome 22 swap part of their DNA. The swap-over, or translocation, forms an abnormal fusion gene called BCR-ABL.

B lymphocyte (or B-cell)

[b lymph.o.cyte](#)

A type of lymphocyte (white blood cells) which produces antibodies to fight infection.

Biopsy

[bi.op.sy](#)

A sample of tissue taken from the body in order to examine it more closely.

Blast Cells

Immature cells found in the bone marrow. They are not fully developed and therefore do not carry any particular function within the body. In normal humans, up to 5% of the cells found in the bone marrow are blast cells.

Blood Cells

Blood cells have many different functions including transporting oxygen and nutrients to the lungs and tissues, forming blood clots to prevent excess blood loss and carrying cells and antibodies that fight infection.

Blood Count

A common test to check a person's general health or to screen for anaemia.

Blood clot (or thrombus, or thrombosis)

throm.bus / throm.bo.sis

A clump of blood that has changed from a liquid to a gel-like or semi-solid state. They are stationary within a vessel or the heart. If it moves from that location through the bloodstream, it is referred to as an embolus.

Blood transfusion

The transfer of blood or blood components from one person (the donor) into the bloodstream of another person (the recipient). Often a lifesaving technique to replace blood cells or blood products lost through bleeding, or when your body can't make blood properly because of an illness such as some MPNs.

Bone marrow

The soft blood-forming tissue that fills the cavities of bones and contains fat, immature and mature blood cells, including white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets.



Bone marrow aspirate

asp.irate

A sample of soft tissue (liquid) that is taken from the bone marrow.

Bone marrow biopsy

[bi.op.sy](#)

A core sample of bone marrow is taken and examined.

Bone Marrow Transplant

A procedure to replace damaged or destroyed bone marrow with healthy bone marrow cells (stem cells).

C

Candida

can.di-da

The genus of yeasts. It is the common cause of fungal infections worldwide, but many species are harmless.

Cancer

ca-n.cer

A group of diseases involving abnormal cell growth with the potential to invade or spread to other parts of the body.

Central line

A tube which is inserted into a large blood vessel either in the chest or arm so blood samples can be taken easily and drugs can be given without the use of needles.

Carcinogen

car.cin.o.gen

A substance capable of causing cancer in a living tissue.

Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)

cere.bro.spin.al flu.id

A clear, colourless body fluid found around the brain and spinal cord.



Chemotherapy

chem.o.ther.apy

A form of cancer treatment that uses one or more anticancer

drugs as part of a standardised chemotherapy regime.

Chronic

[chron-ic](#)

A human health condition or disease that is persistent or otherwise long-lasting in its effects. The term chronic is usually applied when the course of the disease lasts for more than three months.

Chronic Leukaemia

[chron-ic leu.kae.mia](#)

A type of blood cancer that affects the white blood cells. This tends to progress over many years.

Chromosomes

[chro.mo.somes](#)

A thread-like structure of nucleic

acids and proteins found in the nucleus of most living cells. This carries genetic information in the form of genes.

Ciclosporin

[ci.clo.spor.in](#)

A drug that inhibits the function of the immune system (immunosuppressant) used in organ transplantation to prevent rejection.



Clinical trial

A medical research study involving patients with the aim of improving treatments and their side effects. You will always be informed if your treatment is part

of a trial.

Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (CLL)

chron-ic lymph.o.cyt-ic
leu.kae.mia

A cancer that effects the blood and bone marrow derived from lymphocytes.

Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia (CML)

chron-ic my.e.loid leu.kae.mia

A cancer that affects the blood and bone marrow defined by the presence of BCR-Abl translocation.

CNS Leukaemia

Leukaemia that affects the Central Nervous System.

Coagulation

co.ag.u.la.tion

The action or process of a liquid, especially blood, changing into a semi-solid state.

Complementary therapies

These are treatments used alongside conventional western medicine.

Consolidation treatment

One or more treatments used to kill any cancer cells that may be left in the body. This may include radiation, a stem cell transplant or chemotherapy.

Cord blood

Umbilical cord blood is blood that remains in the placenta and in the attached umbilical cord after childbirth. Cord blood

is collected because it contains stem cells which can be used to treat haematopoietic and genetic disorders.

Corticosteroids

[cort.i.co.ste.roids](#)

Steroids, also called corticosteroids, are anti-inflammatory medicines used to treat a range of conditions.

Central Nervous System (CNS)

The central nervous system is part of the nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.

Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)

Specialist Nurse in Cancer Care.

Complete Remission

This means that tests, physical examination and scans show that all signs of cancer are gone. No evidence of disease.

Computed Tomography (CT) scan

A computed tomography (CT scan) which uses X-rays to make a more detailed picture of your body and the structures inside your body.

Cytogenetics

[cyto.gen.et.ics](#)

The study of inheritance in relation to structure and function of chromosomes.

Cytopenia

cy.to.pe.nia

The reduction in the number of blood cells.

Cytoplasm

cy.to.plas.m

The material or protoplasm within a living cell excluding the nucleus.

D

Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation (DIC)

diss.e.min.ate.d in.tra.vasc.u.lar
co.ag.u.la.tion

A pathological process characterised by the widespread activation of the clotting cascade. That results in the formation of blood clots in the small vessels throughout the body.

Diuretic

di.uret.ic

A type of drug used to increase the passing of urine.

Donor Lymphocyte Infusion (DLI)

lymph.o.cyte

Also known as a buffy coat infusion, this is a form of adoptive immunotherapy used after haematopoietic stem cell transplant.

Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA)

de.oxy.ri.bon.u.cle-ic ac.id

A molecule that carries the genetic instructions used in the growth development, functioning and reproduction of all living organisms.

Down Syndrome

Also known as trisomy 21, this is a genetic disorder, caused by the presence of all or part of the 3rd copy of chromosome 21. Research indicates that those with down syndrome have an increased chance of developing leukaemia.

E

Electrolytes

e.lec.tro.lytes

These are certain nutrients (or chemicals) present in your body that have many important functions.

Erythroleukaemia

eryth.ro.leu.ke.mia

A rare acute form of leukaemia in which there is proliferation of immature red and white cells.

F

French-American-British (FAB) classification

The French American and British classification system refers to a series of classification of haematological diseases.

Fatigue

fa.tigue

Extreme tiredness, which is not alleviated by sleep or rest. Fatigue can be acute and come on suddenly or chronic and persist.



Fluorescence in Situ Hybridisation (FISH)

fluor.en.scence in sit.u
hy.bri.dis.a.tion

A test that maps the generic material in a person's cells. The test can be used to visualise specific genes or portions of genes.

Full Blood Count (FBC)

A blood test that counts the number of different blood cells.

G

Generic Drug

A pharmaceutical drug that is equivalent to a brand name product in dosage, strength route of administration, quality and performance and intended use.



Graft rejection

This occurs when transplanted tissue is rejected by recipient's immune system, which destroys the transplanted tissue.

Graft Versus Host Disease (GVHD)

A condition that might occur after

an allogeneic transplant. In GVHD, the donated bone marrow or peripheral blood stem cells view the recipients body as foreign.

Granulocyte

[gran.u.lo.cyte](#)

A type of white blood cell which is characterised by the presence of granules in the cytoplasm. They are important for fighting infection, particularly bacterial infections..

Graft-versus-leukaemia (GVL)

Also known as Graft-versus-tumor effect (GvT), appears after allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT). The graft contains donor T cells (T lymphocytes) that can be beneficial for the recipient by eliminating residual malignant cells.

H

Haemoglobin

[haem.o.glo.bin](#)

The protein molecule in red blood cells that carries oxygen from the lungs to the body's tissues and returns carbon dioxide from the tissues back to the lungs. Haemoglobin is made up of four protein molecules (globulin chains) that are connected together.

Haematopoiesis (or Haemopoiesis)

[he.ma.to.poi.e.sis / he.mo.poi.e.sis](#)

The formation of blood cellular components. All cellular blood components are derived from haematopoietic stem cells.

Haematologist

[haem.a.tol.o.gist](#)

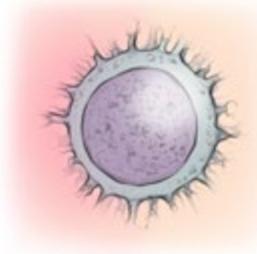
A doctor who specialises in diseases affecting the blood.

They are concerned with any abnormality of the blood, including blood cells and coagulation. Some diseases of the blood include anaemia, leukaemia, lymphoma, polycythaemia and haemophilia.

Haematology

[haem.a.tol.o.gy](#)

The branch of medicine involving study and treatment of the blood



Hairy Cell Leukaemia

[hair.y cell leu.kae.mia](#)

Hairy cell leukaemia is one of the rarest types of leukaemia, which is cancer of the white blood

cells. It gets its name from the fine, hair-like strands around the outside of the cancerous cells, which are visible under a microscope.

Haploidentical Stem Cell Transplant

[hap.loi.dent.i.cal](#)

An allogeneic haemopoietic stem cell (HPC) transplant involves matching a patient's tissue type, specifically their human leukocyte antigen (HLA) tissue type, with that of a related or unrelated donor.

Hepatitis

[hep.a.tit.is](#)

A disease characterised by inflammation of the liver.

Hickman Catheter

[cath.e.ter](#)

A Hickman line is a central venous catheter most often used for the administration of chemotherapy or other medications, as well as for the withdrawal of blood for analysis. Some types are used mainly for the purpose of apheresis or dialysis.

Histology

[hist.ol.o.gy](#)

The study of the microscopic structure of tissues.

Immunophenotyping

i.mmun.o.phen.o.typ.ing

The analysis of heterogeneous populations of cells for the purpose of identifying the presence and proportions of the various populations of interest. Antibodies are used to identify cells by detecting specific antigens expressed by these cells, which are known as markers.

Immunosuppression

i.mmun.o.sup.pres.sion

The partial or complete suppression of the immune response of an individual. It is induced to help the survival of an organ after a transplant operation.

Intensification

in.tens.i.fi.ca.tion

The action of making or becoming more intense.

Intrathecal Injection

in.tr.a.the.cal

A route of administration for drugs via an injection into the spinal canal, or into the subarachnoid space so that it reaches the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) and is useful in spinal anaesthesia, chemotherapy, or pain management applications.

Intravenous Injection

in.tr.a.ven.ous

Some medications must be given by an intravenous (IV) injection or infusion. This means they're sent directly into your vein using a needle or tube. In fact, the term 'intravenous' means 'into the vein.' With IV administration, a thin plastic tube called an IV catheter is inserted into your vein.

J

Juvenile Myelomonocytic Leukaemia (JMML)

ju.ve.nile mye.lo.mon.o.cyt-ic
leu.kae.mia

Juvenile myelomonocytic leukemia (JMML) is a serious chronic leukemia (cancer of the blood) that affects children mostly aged 4 and younger. The name JMML now encompasses all diagnoses formerly referred to as juvenile chronic myeloid leukemia (JCML), chronic myelomonocytic leukemia of infancy, and infantile monosomy 7 syndrome.



K

Key worker

An identified person usually a nurse who provides a vital service throughout a patient's cancer journey, acting as a point of contact between the patient and the hospital and providing support throughout the patient's journey.



L

Large Granular Lymphocytic Leukaemia

large gran.u.lar lymph.o.cyt-ic
leu.kae.mia

T-cell large granular lymphocyte (LGL) leukaemia is the reproduction of cytotoxic (toxic to living cells) T cells, which causes neutropenia, anaemia, and/or thrombocytopenia. This condition is often associated with autoimmune disorders, especially rheumatoid arthritis, and other lymphoproliferative disorders.

Late Effects

Late effects are health problems that occur months or years after treatment has ended. Late effects are governed by the treatment received e.g. chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery, as well as the intensity of that treatment.

Leukaemia

leu.kae.mia

A cancer of the bone marrow/ blood with many different subtypes. Some forms are acute (develop quickly) and others are chronic (develop slowly). Leukaemia is an excess number of abnormal cells in the bone marrow, usually white blood cells, which stop the bone marrow working properly.

Leukaemic Blasts

leu.kae.mic bla-sts

The most immature cells are called myeloblasts or lymphoblasts (or blasts for short). The percentage of blasts in the bone marrow or blood is particularly important. Having at least 20% blasts in the marrow or blood is generally required for a diagnosis of leukaemia.

Leucocytes

leuc.o.cytes

A white blood cells which circulate in the blood and body fluids and are involved in counteracting foreign substances and infections; There are several types, including lymphocytes, granulocytes, and monocytes.

Lumbar Puncture

A medical procedure where a needle is inserted into the lower part of the spine to test for conditions affecting the brain, spinal cord or other parts of the nervous system. During the procedure, pressure is measured and samples of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) are taken.

Lymph node or lymph gland

An oval-shaped organ of the lymphatic system that catches viruses and bacteria. It contains

white blood cells that fight infections.

Lymphocyte

lymph.o.cyte

A type of white blood cell which forms the body's immune system.

M

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a test that uses a magnetic field and pulses of radio wave energy to make pictures of organs and structures inside the body. In many cases, MRI gives different information about structures in the body than can be seen with an X-ray, ultrasound, or computed tomography (CT) scan.

Malignancy

ma.lig.nan.cy

A malignant tumour is one that is able to locally invade tissues and spread to other sites at a distance from the primary tumour.

Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS)

myel.o.dys.pla-stic.syn.drome

A disorder in which the bone

marrow does not maybe make enough healthy blood cells, the maturation of the cells is abnormal and there maybe blasts visible in the marrow. It may be a precursor to the development of acute leukaemia.

Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)

A meeting of the group of professionals from one or more clinical disciplines who together make decisions regarding recommended treatment of individual patients. Multidisciplinary Teams may specialise in certain conditions, such as Cancer.

Minimal Residual Disease (MRD)

The name given to small numbers of leukaemic cells (cancer cells from the bone marrow) that remain in the patient during

treatment, or after treatment when the patient is in remission (no symptoms or signs of disease). It is the major cause of relapse in cancer and leukaemia.

Monoclonal Antibodies

mon.o.clon.al anti.bodies

Antibodies that are made by identical immune cells that are all clones of a unique parent cell. They therefore all bind to the same epitope (the part of an antigen that is recognised by the antibody).



Mucositis

mu.co.si.tis

Oral mucositis is a common complication of chemotherapy. It begins 5-10 days after the start of chemotherapy and lasts 7-14 days. Chemotherapy-induced mucositis causes the mucosal lining of the mouth and gut to atrophy (waste away) and break down forming ulcers, leading to a sore mouth and diarrhoea.

Mutation

The changing of the structure of a gene, resulting in a variant form which may be transmitted to subsequent generations, caused by the alteration of single base

units in DNA, or the deletion, insertion, or rearrangement of larger sections of genes or chromosomes.

Myeloid

mye.loid

An adjective that in its broadest sense means either "resembling bone marrow" or "pertaining to bone marrow", and the related adjective myelogenous (myelo- + -genous) means "arising from bone marrow".

N

Neutropenia

[neu.tro.pe.nia](#)

A condition in which the number of neutrophils (a type of white blood cell) in the bloodstream is decreased.

Neutropenic Sepsis

[neu.tro.pen-ic sep.sis](#)

A life-threatening complication of anticancer treatment, the term is used to describe a significant inflammatory response to a presumed bacterial infection in a person with or without fever.

Neutrophil

[neu.tro.phil](#)

A type of white blood cell that helps fight infection.

O

Oncologist

[on.col.o.gist](#)

A doctor who treats cancer. Usually, an oncologist manages a person's care and treatment once he or she is diagnosed with cancer. The field of oncology has three major areas: medical, surgical, and radiation.



P

Pancytopenia

pan.cy.to.pe.nia

Deficiency of red cells, white cells, and platelets in the blood.

Pathologist

pa.thol.o.gist

A scientist who studies the causes and effects of diseases, especially one who examines laboratory samples of body tissue for diagnostic or forensic purposes.

Peripheral blood

pe.ri.pher.al

Is the circulating pool of blood within which the cellular components of blood, red blood cells (erythrocytes), white blood cells (leucocytes), and platelets, are found.

Petechiae

pe.te.chi.ae

A small red or purple spot caused by bleeding into the skin.

Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scan

pos.i.tron

A positron emission tomography (PET) scan is an imaging test that helps reveal how your tissues and organs are functioning. A PET scan uses a radioactive drug (tracer) to show this activity.

Philadelphia Chromosome

The Philadelphia chromosome or Philadelphia translocation is a specific genetic abnormality in which a part of chromosome 22 and chromosome 9 are switched. This is found in leukaemia cancer cells (particularly chronic myelogenous leukaemia (CML))

cells and ALL).

Phlebotomists

phle.bot.o.mists

People trained to draw blood from a patient for clinical or medical testing, transfusions, donations, or research.

Phlebotomy

phle.bot.o.my

Taking of a blood sample from a person.



Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) Line

A PICC line is a thin, soft, long catheter (tube) that is inserted into a vein in your arm, leg or neck. The tip of the catheter is positioned in a large vein that carries blood into the heart. The PICC line is used for long-term intravenous (IV) antibiotics, nutrition or medications, and for blood draws.

Plasma Cell Leukaemia

Plasma cell leukemia (PCL) is an aggressive form of multiple myeloma characterised by high levels of abnormal plasma cells circulating in the peripheral (circulating) blood. Normal plasma cells in the bone marrow produce antibodies that fight infection.

Platelet

A disc-shaped element in the

blood that assists in blood clotting. During normal blood clotting, the platelets clump together (aggregate).

Platelet count

A normal platelet count in a healthy individual is between 150,000 and 450,000 per microlitre of blood. In general, low platelet counts increase bleeding risks.

Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)

[poly.mer.ase](#)

Polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, is a laboratory technique used to make multiple copies of a segment of DNA. PCR is very precise and can be used to amplify, or copy, a specific DNA target from a mixture of DNA molecules.

Portacath

[port.a.cath](#)

A portacath is an implanted venous access device for patients who need frequent or continuous administration of chemotherapy. Drugs used for chemotherapy are often toxic, and can damage skin, muscle tissue, and sometimes veins.

Preleukaemia

[pre.leu.kae.mia](#)

Used as a name for Myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS). This is a group of diseases that affects normal blood cell production in the bone marrow. These cells fail to mature properly. They are unable to work properly. They often die before they leave the marrow, or shortly after reaching the bloodstream.

Prognosis

A complete prognosis includes the expected duration, function, and description of the course of the disease, such as progressive decline, intermittent crisis, or sudden, unpredictable crisis.

Prophylaxis

[pro.phy.lax.is](#)

The treatment given or action taken to prevent disease.

Protocol

A system of rules that explain the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations.

Purpura

[pur.pu.ra](#)

A condition of red or purple discolored spots on the skin

that do not blanch on applying pressure.

Q/R

Radiotherapy

The use of high energy X-Rays to treat cancer. The radiotherapy field is the area of the body being treated. Cancer cells are killed within the radiotherapy field.

Red blood cell

The blood cell that carries oxygen. Red cells contain haemoglobin, which permits them to transport oxygen (and carbon dioxide).

Relapse

The return of a disease or the signs and symptoms of a disease after a period of improvement.

Remission

A period of time when illness is less severe or is not affecting someone.

Remission induction

Initial treatment with anticancer drugs to decrease the signs or symptoms of cancer or make them disappear.

Resistant or Refractory disease

Refractory describes a disease or condition which does not respond to attempted forms of treatment. A cancer is said to be refractory when it does not respond to (or is resistant to) cancer treatment. Refractory cancer is also known as resistant cancer.

S

Secondary Leukaemia

A collective term used to describe a group of patients with acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) or myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) who have a history of environmental, occupational or therapeutic exposure to hematotoxins or radiation.

Septicaemia

[sep.ti.ce.mia](#)

Another term used to describe blood poisoning. It is an infection caused by large amounts of bacteria entering the bloodstream. It is a potentially life-threatening infection that affects thousands of patients every year.

Sibling

A sibling is one of two or more individuals having one or both parents in common.

Sinuses

[si.nus.es](#)

Small, air-filled cavities behind your cheekbones and forehead. The mucus produced by your sinuses usually drains into your nose through small channels. In sinusitis, these channels become blocked because the sinus linings are inflamed (swollen).

Specimen

A small amount or piece that is taken from something, so that it can be tested or examined.

Spleen

The largest organ in the lymphatic system. Similar in structure to a large lymph node it acts primarily as a blood filter and defends the body against infection.

Splenectomy

sple.nec.to.my

A surgical procedure to remove your spleen. The spleen is an organ that sits under your rib cage on the upper left side of your abdomen. It helps fight infection and filters unneeded material, such as old or damaged blood cells.

Splenomegaly

spleno.meg.a.ly

Abnormal enlargement of the spleen.

Staging

Cancer staging, a description (usually numbers I to V) of the size of the cancer and whether and how much it has spread.

Stem cells

Cells that have the potential to develop into many different or specialised cell types.

Stem Cell Transplant (SCT)

A stem cell transplant is a treatment for some types of cancer as well as other blood diseases and disorders of the immune system. A stem cell transplant involves the administration of chemotherapy plus or minus radiotherapy as conditioning followed by infusion of stem cells. The stem cells engraft and form a new immune system.

Subcutaneous injection

sub.cu.ta.ne.ous

A method of administering medication. Subcutaneous means under the skin. In this type of injection, a short needle is used to inject a drug into the tissue layer between the skin and the muscle.

T

Thrombocytopenia

throm.bo.cy.to.pe.nia

A disorder characterised by abnormally low levels of thrombocytes also known as platelets, in the blood.

Thrombosis

throm.bo.sis

The formation or presence of a blood clot in a blood vessel. The vessel may be any vein or artery. The clot itself is termed a thrombus (see blood clot).

Tissue Typing

To determine the tissue type of. This is the assessment of the immunological compatibility of tissue from separate sources, particularly prior to organ transplantation.

T lymphocyte (or T-Cell)

t lymph.o.cyte

A T cell, or T lymphocyte, is a type of lymphocyte (a subtype of white blood cell) that plays a central role in cell-mediated immunity. T cells can be distinguished from other lymphocytes, such as B cells and natural killer cells, by the presence of a T-cell receptor on the cell surface.

Tyrosine Kinase

ty.ro.sine ki.nase

A protein or enzyme which controls cellular functions, switching them on and off. The BCR-ABL protein is an example of a tyrosine kinase.

Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitor (TKI)

A drug which blocks the action of a tyrosine kinase (particular type of enzyme in the cell). In CML

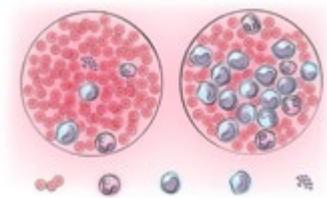
it works mainly by blocking the activity of the BCR/ABL protein.

Total Body Irradiation (TBI)

A form of radiotherapy used primarily as part of the preparative regimen for haematopoietic stem cell (or bone marrow) transplantation.

Transformation

Malignant transformation is the process of cells becoming cancerous.



U

Ultrasound Scan

Sometimes called a sonogram, is a procedure that uses high-frequency sound waves to create an image of part of the inside of the body.

V

Virology

[vi.rol.o.gy](#)

The branch of science that deals with the study of viruses.

Virus

An infective agent that typically consists of a nucleic acid molecule in a protein coat, is too small to be seen by light microscopy, and is able to multiply only within the living cells of a host.

W

White blood cell (or leukocytes)

One of the cells the body makes to help fight infections. There are several types of white blood cells. The two most common types are the lymphocytes and neutrophils.

X-Rays

X-Rays are a type of radiation called electromagnetic waves. X-rays are high energy and can pass through the body to an X-ray film creating pictures of the inside of your body. The images show the parts of your body in different shades of black and white.



Useful contacts and further support

There are a number of helpful sources to support you during your diagnosis, treatment and beyond, including:

- Your haematologist and healthcare team
- Your family and friends
- Your psychologist (ask your haematologist or CNS for a referral)
- Reliable online sources, such as Leukaemia Care
- Charitable organisations

There are a number of organisations, including ourselves, who provide expert advice and information.

Leukaemia Care

We are a charity dedicated to supporting anyone affected by the diagnosis of any blood cancer. We provide emotional support through a range of support services including a helpline, patient and carer conferences, support group, informative website, one-to-one buddy service and high-quality patient information. We also have a nurse on our help line for any medical queries relating to your diagnosis.

Helpline: **08088 010 444**
www.leukaemiacare.org.uk
care@leukaemiacare.org.uk

Bloodwise

Bloodwise is the leading charity into the research of blood cancers. They offer support to patients, their family and friends through patient services.

020 7504 2200
www.bloodwise.org.uk

Cancer Research UK

Cancer Research UK is a leading charity dedicated to cancer research.

0808 800 4040
www.cancerresearchuk.org

Macmillan

Macmillan provides free practical, medical and financial support for people facing cancer.

0808 808 0000
www.macmillan.org.uk

Maggie's Centres

Maggie's offers free practical, emotional and social support to people with cancer and their families and friends.

0300 123 1801
www.maggiescentres.org

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Offers advice on benefits and financial assistance.

08444 111 444
www.adviceguide.org.uk

Leukaemia Care is a national charity dedicated to providing information, advice and support to anyone affected by a blood cancer.

Around 34,000 new cases of blood cancer are diagnosed in the UK each year. We are here to support you, whether you're a patient, carer or family member.

Want to talk?

Helpline: **08088 010 444**

(free from landlines and all major mobile networks)

Office Line: **01905 755977**

www.leukaemicare.org.uk

care@leukaemicare.org.uk

Leukaemia Care,
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Registered charity
259483 and SC039207

Leukaemia Care
YOUR Blood Cancer Charity

