

Understanding **Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL)**

What is CLL?



CLL is a cancer that starts in your B lymphocytes, a specific type of white blood cell vital for fighting infections.¹



With CLL, your bone marrow produces too many abnormal, mature B lymphocytes.¹



Unlike healthy cells, these leukemia cells don't die when they should, and they can't effectively fight off infections.¹

What happens in CLL?

The cancer (leukemia) cells move from your bone marrow into your bloodstream, where they crowd out healthy blood cells before potentially spreading to other parts of the body, including organs.¹

CLL is closely related to small lymphocytic lymphoma (SLL). While CLL is found mainly in the blood and bone marrow, SLL appears mainly in the lymph nodes and spleen.¹

How could CLL affect me?

CLL symptoms generally develop over time. Common signs and symptoms can include^{1,2}:

Fever and night sweats

Fatigue and weakness

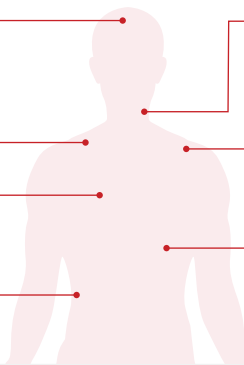
Shortness of breath during routine physical activity

Infections

Swollen lymph nodes (usually in neck)

Weight loss not related to diet or exercise

Swollen spleen or liver (feeling of fullness)



How is CLL treated?

CLL is diagnosed through blood tests, lymph node biopsy or bone marrow tests.³ An accurate diagnosis can help identify the type of leukemia and inform the best treatment plan.

For people in early stages of slow-growing or chronic forms of blood cancers, “active surveillance” (also called “watch and wait”) may be appropriate.⁴

Treatment options aim to help manage the disease and slow the growth of cancer cells. Some treatments are designed to be ongoing, while others can be time-limited courses. These may include^{5,6}:

- chemotherapy
- targeted therapy
- immunotherapy
- radiation
- stem cell transplant
- or a combination of these options

New types of investigational agents are being tested in clinical trials, which are research studies to help develop potential treatments for patients.⁵

CLL Fast Facts

CLL accounts for approximately **1 in 3 new leukemia cases in the US.**⁷

It mainly affects older adults, with the **average age of diagnosis around 70 years old.**⁷

Men are more likely to be diagnosed with CLL than women.⁷

References

1. American Cancer Society. What Is Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL)? Accessed April 2026. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/chronic-lymphocytic-leukemia/about/what-is-cll.html>. 2. Blood Cancer United. Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL) Signs and Symptoms. Accessed April 2026. <https://bloodcancerunited.org/blood-cancer/leukemia/chronic-lymphocytic-leukemia-cll/signs-and-symptoms>. 3. Blood Cancer United. Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) Diagnosis. Accessed April 2026. <https://bloodcancerunited.org/blood-cancer/leukemia/chronic-lymphocytic-leukemia-cll/diagnosis>. 4. Blood Cancer United. Watch and Wait. Accessed April 2026. <https://bloodcancerunited.org/blood-cancer-care/adults/types-blood-cancer-treatment/watch-and-wait>. 5. NIH National Cancer Institute. Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia Treatment (PDQ®)—Patient Version. Accessed April 2026. <https://www.cancer.gov/types/leukemia/patient/cll-treatment-pdq>. 6. American Cancer Society. Typical Treatment of Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL). Accessed April 2026. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/chronic-lymphocytic-leukemia/treating/treatment-by-risk-group.html>. 7. American Cancer Society. Key Statistics for Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL). Accessed April 2026. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/chronic-lymphocytic-leukemia/about/key-statistics.html>.



Find More Information

Scan the QR code to visit our Hematology Ambition website for valuable educational resources and support designed specifically for patients and caregivers navigating a CLL diagnosis.

