

What is Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL)?

ALL is the most common type of childhood leukemia.^{1,2} It is a rapidly progressing cancer that starts in the bone marrow and spreads into the blood.³ It represents 12 percent of all leukemia cases worldwide, and about 80 percent of childhood leukemia cases.^{4,5} However, the 5-year survival rate for children with ALL is now about 90 percent.⁶ In 2020 it is estimated that there will be more than 6,000 new cases of ALL in the United States.⁷



Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of ALL may include:⁸

- Bleeding from the gums
- Bone pain
- Fever
- Frequent infections
- Frequent or severe nosebleeds
- Lumps caused by swollen lymph nodes
- Pale skin
- Shortness of breath
- Weakness/fatigue



Treatment

Treatment options for ALL can be affected by the patient's ALL subtype, age and overall state of health. The main types of treatments include:^{9,10}

- Chemotherapy
- Targeted Therapy
- Immunotherapy
- Surgery
- Radiation Therapy
- Stem Cell Transplant

Survivorship

While ALL is highly treatable, some patients may experience long-term effects or late effects from the disease and/or treatment.^{11,12} This is why survivorship in ALL begins the day of diagnosis and continues throughout life, even for a patient in remission. It is considered one of the most complex aspects of the cancer experience because it is different for every patient. Patients and their families may experience a range of varied and strong emotions, including joy, concern, relief, guilt and fear.¹³

In addition to the emotional toll, patients may experience:¹⁴

- Chronic heart conditions
- Lung disease
- Liver disease
- Fertility issues
- Reduced bone density and muscle strength
- Subsequent cancers
- Brain and nerve dysfunction
- Fatigue

Coordination between patients' oncologists and primary care physicians is essential for receiving the best care possible. Some treatment centers feature survivorship or follow-up cancer care clinics, which provide a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach for monitoring and supporting cancer survivors. It is helpful to be seen yearly at a long-term survivorship clinic specifically for cancer survivors, in addition to the regular visits to a primary care physician.¹²

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