NCCN GUIDELINES FOR PATIENTS®

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NCCN QUICK GUIDE™
Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia

Treatment Planning

This NCCN QUICK GUIDE™ sheet summarizes key points from the complete NCCN Guidelines for Patients®: Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. These guidelines explain which tests and treatments are recommended by experts in cancer. To view and download the guidelines, visit NCCN.org/patients or, to order printed copies, visit Amazon.com

What is ALL (acute lymphoblastic leukemia)?

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■ Leukemias are cancers that start in blood-forming cells in the bone marrow. There is more than one type of leukemia.	9
■ ALL is a fast-growing leukemia that causes too many young white blood cells (blast cells) to be made. Those young white blood cells would normally become a type of white blood cells called lymphocytes.	

Do I have ALL?

■ ALL may cause a number of symptoms, often due to a low number of healthy blood cells.	12
■ To confirm if you have ALL, a sample of blood and bone marrow must be removed from your body. The samples will be sent to a lab to be tested for leukemia cells.	18

What tests do I need before treatment?

■ Medical history and exam of your body to check for signs of disease.	14
■ Blood tests to count the number of red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets.	16
■ Urinalysis, also other blood tests to assess levels of chemicals, find your blood type, check for viruses, and find your tissue type.	17
■ Bone marrow biopsy and aspiration to remove a sample of bone marrow for testing.	18
■ Bone marrow tests to show if ALL started in B-lymphocytes or T-lymphocytes.	18
■ Genetic tests to look for certain gene and chromosome changes in the leukemia cells.	19
■ Lumbar puncture to remove spinal fluid to test for leukemia cells.	22
■ Imaging tests to look inside your body for cancer sites (only needed in some cases).	23
■ A test to check the health of your heart.	23

How do doctors group ALL for treatment planning?

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Cell subtypes	■ Doctors classify ALL into two broad groups based on the type of lymphocyte in which it started. ■ These groups are called cell subtypes. ■ The two main cell subtypes are B-cell ALL and T-cell ALL. ▸ B-cell ALL starts in young B-lymphocytes ▸ T-cell ALL starts in young T-lymphocytes	27
Cytogenetic subtypes	■ Doctors also classify ALL based on the types of abnormal chromosome changes found in the leukemia cells. ■ These groups are called cytogenetic subtypes. ■ The two main cytogenetic subtypes are based on whether or not the leukemia cells have the abnormal Philadelphia chromosome. ▸ Ph-negative ALL: The leukemia cells do not have the Philadelphia chromosome ▸ Ph-positive ALL: The leukemia cells have the Philadelphia chromosome	27
Patient age groups	■ Your age and health status are key factors doctors use to decide if you should receive very intensive treatments. ■ Thus, doctors divide patients into two groups based on age. ▸ AYAs (**a**dolescents and **y**oung **a**dults): Patients who are 15 to 39 years of age ▸ Older adults: Patients who are 40 years of age or older	28

What is treatment like?

■ It depends on which treatment you have. There is more than one treatment to choose from.	30
■ All treatments can cause side effects. But, how your body will react can't be fully known.	41
■ Share your thoughts, goals, and concerns about treatment with your doctors. This can help you get the best treatment plan for you.	70