

Therapeutic Procedures, Chapter 20).

### **Provide Continued Emotional Support**

Nursing care of the child with leukemia is based on typical problems the family confronts during the treatment phases. The nurse's role is one of continual support, guidance, clarification, and judgment. Parents need to know how to recognize symptoms that demand medical attention. Although some of the reactions discussed are expected, parents should still report them to their practitioner. Warning parents of their possible occurrence beforehand also allows parents to prepare. At the same time, it reassures them that these reactions are not caused by a return of leukemic cells.

Another aspect of continued emotional support involves prognosis. Leukemia is not invariably fatal, but present statistics must be correctly interpreted. Although almost 80% of children with ALL live 5 years or longer, these are average estimates that apply to those children treated with the most successful protocols since diagnosis. For the high-risk child with ALL, the prognosis may be significantly poorer. Of those who do survive after discontinuing therapy, a portion will relapse. The nurse must realize that a realistic understanding of the chances for survival requires an adjustment period. During the initial diagnosis or when a relapse occurs, parents may find it difficult to “hear” the facts. The nurse who is working with family members must individualize the numbers to relate to the people. An understanding of each member's emotional needs, as well as competent care of physical ones, is essential to the positive, growth-promoting support of the family. Comprehensive emotional support for the family of a child with a chronic illness and the child at end of life is discussed in [Chapter 17](#).

## **Lymphomas**

The lymphomas, a group of neoplastic diseases that arise from the lymphoid and hematopoietic systems, are divided into Hodgkin disease and NHL. These diseases are further subdivided according to tissue type and extent of disease (staging). In children NHL is more common than Hodgkin disease. Although Hodgkin disease is