

"Follicular lymphoma is a form of cancer. It is a type of non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL), which is a group of related cancers that affect the lymphatic system (lymphomas). The lymphatic system functions as part of the immune system and helps to protect the body against infection and disease. It consists of a network of tubular channels (lymph vessels) that drain a thin watery fluid known as lymph from different areas of the body into the bloodstream. Lymph accumulates in the tiny spaces between tissue cells and contains proteins, fats, and certain white blood cells known as lymphocytes. As lymph moves through the lymphatic system, it is filtered by a network of small structures known as lymph nodes that help to remove microorganisms (e.g., viruses, bacteria, etc.) and other foreign bodies. Groups of lymph nodes are located throughout the body, including, but not limited to, the neck, under the arms (axillae), at the elbows, and in the chest, abdomen, and groin. Lymphocytes are stored within lymph nodes and may also be found in other lymphatic tissues. In addition to the lymph nodes, the lymphatic system includes the spleen, which filters worn-out red blood cells and produces lymphocytes, and bone marrow, which is the spongy tissue inside the cavities of bones that manufactures blood cells. Lymphatic tissue or circulating lymphocytes may also be located in other regions of the body. There are two main types of lymphocytes: B-lymphocytes (B-cells), which may produce specific antibodies to ""neutralize"" certain invading microorganisms, and T-lymphocytes (T-cells), which may directly destroy microorganisms or cancer cells, or assist in the activities of other lymphocytes. Follicular lymphoma affects both men and women, but is slightly more common in women. This form of cancer is found all over the world and can affect people of all races. It is less common in individuals of Asian or African heritage than it is in other ethnicities. The mean age at diagnosis is 65. In the United States and Western Europe, follicular lymphoma is the second most common subtype of non-Hodgkin lymphoma accounting for about 30%-35% of people with non-Hodgkin lymphoma and almost 75% of people with indolent forms of lymphoma. Each year, 15-20,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with follicular lymphoma. Pediatric follicular lymphoma is extremely rare variant that makes up only 1-2% of all malignant lymphomas in children. Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, as a group, accounts for about 4.3% of people with cancer in the United States."