

Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL): Treatment Questions



Talking with healthcare providers about cancer can be overwhelming. It can be hard to take in all of the information. It helps to be prepared. Make a list of questions you have and bring them to your appointments. Write the answers down. Make sure you ask how the treatment will change your daily life, including your diet, and how you will look and feel after treatment. Ask how successful the treatment is expected to be, and what the risks and possible side effects are.

You may also want to ask a friend or family member to go with you. They can take notes and write down the answers. This person may ask questions you may not think of. You can also ask your healthcare provider if you can record the conversation.

Below are some questions to ask during your appointments.

Deciding on a treatment

- What is the stage of my CLL? What does this mean?
- Do I need any other tests before we can decide on treatment?
- Do I need to see any other types of healthcare providers?
- Do I need to start treatment right away, or is watchful waiting an option? Why or why not?
- If we decide on watchful waiting, what tests will I need?
- What treatment do you think is best for me? Why?
- What is the goal of treatment?
- What is the success rate of this treatment for my type of leukemia?
- How much experience do you have treating cancers like mine?
- Should I get a second opinion?
- Are there any clinical trials I should try?
- Will my insurance cover treatment? How much will I have to pay?

Getting ready for treatment

- How soon do I need to start treatment?
- What can I do to get ready for treatment?
- How long will the treatment take?
- Where do I have to go for the treatment?
- How long will I need treatment?
- What will the treatment be like?
- How much of the treatment will need to be done in the hospital? If so, how long will I be there?
- Do I have to go anywhere for the treatment, or can it be done at home?

- Can I take my other medicines, vitamins, herbs, or other supplements during treatment?
- Should I change my diet? Are there any foods I shouldn't eat?
- Will I need any tests during treatment? If so, how often?
- How will we know if the treatment is working?

Coping during treatment

- How will I feel during treatment?
- Will I be able to go to work and be around my family?
- Will treatment affect my sex life or my ability to have children?
- What side effects can I expect?
- How long will the side effects last?
- Are there side effects that I need to call you about? What number do I call?
- How do I contact your office on nights, holidays, and weekends?
- What can I do to ease the side effects?
- How often will I need to see you during treatment?
- Who do I call if I have problems or questions?
- Are there any long-term side effects I should watch for?
- Are there support groups that I can join?
- Do you have someone on staff who can help me with transportation, finances, or other resources?

After treatment

- How will I feel after the treatment?
- What type of follow-up will I need after treatment?
- How will we know if the treatment worked?
- What are my choices if the treatment doesn't work, or the cancer comes back?

Making a decision

Once you have answers from your healthcare provider, it's time to think about your preferences. Think about what side effects you can and can't tolerate. Talk about your concerns with your healthcare provider before making a decision about treatment.

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