

Title:

Possible Leukemia Causes and Risk Factors

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Summary:

Leukemia is a disease that is considered to be life-threatening. It requires prompt intervention

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Article Body:

Leukemia is a disease that is considered to be life-threatening. It requires prompt intervention when discovered, in order to maximize the chances of recovering through specific treatment and therapy. Leukemia is basically a type of cancer of the bone marrow and blood, caused by inappropriate cellular activity. The disease can be of different forms, according to the types of blood cells that cause its development. Also, if leukemia is developing rapidly, it is called acute leukemia, while if the disease is developing slowly, it is referred to as chronic leukemia.

The direct leukemia causes are still unknown. In present, medical science isn't able to establish the specific leukemia causes. However, a strong connection between certain genetic factors and the development of the disease has been revealed. Leukemia occurs on the background of genetic failure that causes the excessive production of incomplete, partially matured blood cells. Also, leukemia has a hereditary character, allowing the transmission of genetic predispositions to disease from one generation to another. Although many factors are known to contribute to the development of leukemia, they alone can't be considered leukemia causes.

Despite the fact that statistics indicate a higher incidence of the disease in people that are exposed to some environmental factors of risk, leukemia doesn't seem to be caused by neither of them in particular. Among the environmental factors that are thought to be leukemia causes, here are some of the most plausible ones:

- Smoking - smoking is thought to increase the chances of being affected by leukemia. Although statistics show that around 20 percent of acute leukemia

cases are related to smoking, leukemia also occurs to people that don't smoke and therefore it can't be considered a leukemia cause on itself;

- Prolonged exposure to radiation - Radiation is considered to facilitate the development of leukemia. It is believed that exposure to X-rays can be a leukemia cause;

- Prolonged exposure to benzene - statistics reveal that this is a major factor of risk in some forms of leukemia, such as myelogenous leukemia;

- Chemotherapy and cancer treatment - previous cancer treatments and chemotherapy are known to facilitate the occurrence and development of leukemia and can be considered plausible leukemia causes. Within a few years from the completion of chemotherapy and other treatments for certain forms of cancer, most people can develop leukemia.

Among the genetic factors that are considered to be leukemia causes, the following ones are thought to be the most important:

- chromosome abnormalities - some rare genetic syndromes are known to contribute to leukemia causes;

- Immune system genetic problems - a weak immune system is very likely to facilitate the occurrence of leukemia and therefore can be considered a leukemia cause;

- Down syndrome - children born with this syndrome have a very high risk of developing acute leukemia.

The list of possible leukemia causes can continue further, but these are the most common factors that are considered to be interrelated with leukemia. While some of them can be prevented, others reside within the genes and in present can't be corrected. In future, however, thanks to medical advance, we will probably be able to prevent leukemia and other forms of cancer.