



Lymphoma

According to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, over 74,000 people are diagnosed with lymphoma every year in the United States.

What is Lymphoma?

A group of blood cancers that begin in the lymphatic system is generally referred to as lymphoma. This type of cancer occurs when a lymphocyte (a type of white blood cell) changes into a malignant form. This cell then multiplies and creates tumors, which overtake the healthy cells.

Lymphoma is divided into two types: Hodgkin lymphoma (also known as Hodgkin's disease) and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The more common is non-Hodgkin, which accounts for about 88 percent of all lymphoma cases.

The difference between the two kinds of lymphoma is found under a microscope. If a cell called a Reed-Sternberg cell is present, the lymphoma is classified as Hodgkin's. Reed-Sternberg cells are large, malignant cells found in the lymphatic tissues.

Risk Factors

Doctors do not know what causes most cases of lymphoma. And many people with lymphoma do not have

identifiable risk factors, but there are some factors that appear to increase the risk for this cancer, such as:

- Older age – most cases are found in those over age 60
- Exposure to certain chemicals – There is an increase in non-Hodgkin lymphoma in farming communities, and it appears that some chemicals found in herbicides and pesticides may play a role in this cancer's development
- Exposure to radiation
- Those with weak immune systems (such as those who have received organ transplants)
- Infection from the Epstein-Barr virus
- Having HIV
- Obesity

Symptoms

Signs of lymphoma may include:

- Swelling of lymph nodes
- Constant fatigue
- Change in appetite
- Night sweats/chills
- Itching

Treatment

Hodgkin lymphoma:

Management of this form of cancer may include chemotherapy, radiation or a bone marrow transplant.

Non-Hodgkin lymphoma:

Most often treatment will include chemotherapy, radiation and/or observation – lymphomas that grow very slowly may not need treatment immediately.

The sooner the cancer is discovered, the better the chances for recovery. The five-year survival rate for Hodgkin lymphoma is about 91 percent; the five-year survival rate for non-Hodgkin lymphoma is almost 69 percent (for those diagnosed under the age of 45).

For more information, visit www.leukemia-lymphoma.org



Did You Know...?

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society estimates that non-Hodgkin lymphoma is the fifth most common cancer among males and females in the United States.