

Leukemia

Leukemia is a type of cancer that affects blood-forming tissues, including the bone marrow. It causes the body to produce excessive amounts of abnormal, immature white blood cells that crowd out healthy blood cells. This can lead to symptoms like fatigue, frequent infections, and easy bruising. There are four main types of leukemia: acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL), acute myeloid leukemia (AML), chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), and chronic myeloid leukemia (CML).

Statistics

- In 2026, an estimated 67,790 new cases of leukemia will be diagnosed in the United States.
- An estimated 23,910 people will die from leukemia in 2026.
- The overall five-year survival rate for leukemia is 68% but varies based on type: 71% for AML, 90% for ALL, and 91% for CML among youth.
- In Texas, an estimated 5,660 new cases of leukemia and approximately 1,820 deaths are expected in 2026.

Risk Factors

There is no guaranteed way to prevent leukemia, but certain risk factors can increase a person's risk of developing the disease:

- **Cigarette Smoking:** Smoking introduces toxic chemicals into the blood stream that damage DNA and cause mutations that lead to leukemia.
- **Exposure to High-Level Ionizing Radiation:** This level of radiation, most commonly from prior cancer treatment, can cause direct damage to DNA in the bone marrow, increasing the risk of AML and CML.
- **Certain Genetic Abnormalities:** Li-Fraumeni or Down syndrome are associated with an increased risk of leukemia.

Symptoms

Leukemia may cause symptoms, such as:

- Fatigue
- Pale or lighter-colored skin
- Weight loss
- Repeated infections
- Fever
- Night sweats
- Bruising or bleeding easily
- Bone or joint pain
- Swelling

Prevention

While little is known about what exactly causes leukemia, people can take steps to lower their overall cancer risk by:

- Avoiding or stopping smoking
- Avoiding or limiting alcohol
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Staying physically active
- Eating a diet rich in protein and fiber

Treatment Options

Depending on the disease stage and type and the tumor's size and location, leukemia may be treated with one or a combination of the following:

- Chemotherapy
- Targeted therapies
- Stem cell transplantation
- CAR T-Cell Therapy

About Texas Oncology

Founded in 1986, Texas Oncology is an independent, physician-led practice and a member of the US Oncology Network. With more than 550 physicians and 300 locations across Texas, Texas Oncology serves over 250,000 cancer patients each year.

Texas Oncology provides advanced care across 19 specialties and offers a comprehensive clinical trials and research program that has contributed to the development of more than 100 FDA-approved cancer therapies. Learn more at [TexasOncology.com](https://www.texasoncology.com).