

Acute Myeloid Leukemia

Myeloid leukemia is the most common type of acute leukemia in adults.

1 Introduction

Acute myeloid leukemia (AML), also known as acute myelogenous leukemia, is a type of cancer that begins in the bone marrow and can quickly spread into the blood. It is considered “acute” because of the disease’s rapid progression. This type of cancer affects white blood cells called myeloid cells. There is no known cause as to why the disease develops, but some risk factors, like increasing age and radiation exposure, are associated with an increased risk of developing it.

2 Symptoms

Early stages of acute myeloid leukemia can mimic the flu symptoms or other common diseases. The main signs of AML include:

- Bone pain
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Easy bruising
- Frequent infections
- Unusual bleeding, e.g. frequent nosebleeds or bleeding gums

3 Diagnosis

AML normally requires a series of tests in order to be diagnosed. The following are just a few of the tests that are used:

- **Blood test with differential.** This is used to count the number of red cells, white cells and platelets in the blood.
- **Bone marrow test.** These tests are taken from the hip bone. The samples are examined to look for chromosomal and other cell changes.
- **Immunophenotyping.** The samples from this test can diagnose specific types of leukemia.

4 Treatments

Different types of treatments are available for people with acute myeloid leukemia, including chemotherapy, radiation therapy, chemo with stem cell transplant and targeted therapy. Patients will normally go through two stages of treatment for AML. The first is remission induction therapy, which aims to kill the leukemia cells in the blood and bone marrow. The second stage is post remission therapy, which occurs after the leukemia is in remission.

Did you know?

Males are more likely to develop acute myeloid leukemia than females.

For more information on acute myeloid leukemia and supportive resources, please visit [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

References:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/acute-myelogenous-leukemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20369109>

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/acute-myeloid-leukemia/about/what-is-aml.html>

<https://www.cancer.gov/types/leukemia/patient/adult-aml-treatment-pdq>