

Diagnosing Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (CLL) - A Quick Guide



Contents

This is a brief summary of the information on 'Diagnosing chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL)' from CancerHelp UK. You will find more detailed information on the website.

In this information there are sections on

- Tests for CLL
- Further tests for CLL
- What to ask your doctor

Tests for chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL)

You usually begin by seeing your GP. They will ask about your general health and examine you. Your GP may order a blood test. Your doctor will feel for any swollen glands or organs and look for signs of abnormal bleeding.

Many cases of CLL are picked up by chance when a person has a routine blood test.

At the hospital

If your GP suspects that you may have leukaemia, they will suggest that you go and see a specialist called a haematologist. This is a doctor who treats diseases of the blood. Your haematologist will ask you to

have some tests to find out if anything is wrong. The tests may include

- Blood tests
- X-rays
- Ultrasound or CT scan

You will probably have to make other appointments and come back to have some of these tests.

Further tests for chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL)

If tests show you have CLL, your haematologist may ask for you to have some more tests.

A bone marrow test looks at the cells in your bone marrow. The doctor uses a thin needle to draw out some of the liquid bone marrow from your hipbone. The cells are looked at under a microscope in the laboratory.

Your haematologist may order a laboratory test to look for abnormalities in the leukaemia cell genes. Doctors use this test to help them work out which treatment people each person with CLL needs.



If a bone marrow or stem cell transplant is a possible treatment for you, you may have a blood test for tissue typing.

If you have not already had one you may have a CT scan. A CT scan is a series of detailed X-ray pictures that gives a 3 dimensional (3D) picture of the body. This test can help to pinpoint enlarged lymph nodes and abnormalities in other organs.

While you are waiting for results, it may help to talk to a close friend or relative about how you are feeling. Or you may want to contact a cancer support group to talk to someone who has been through similar experiences.

What to ask your doctor about chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL)

- What tests will I need to have?
- Why do I have to have them?
- What will the tests show?
- Are there any risks associated with any of the tests?
- Are any of the tests likely to be painful?
- Can I eat normally before the tests?
- Can I bring someone with me when I have the tests?
- Will I have to go into hospital for any of these tests?
- What do you expect the results of the tests to tell you?
- How long will the results take?
- Who will give me the test results?

More information

For more information about chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL), visit our website <http://cancerhelp.cancerresearchuk.org>

You will find a wide range of detailed, up to date information for people affected by cancer, including a clinical trials database that you can search for cancer trials in the UK. You can view or print the information in a larger size if you need to.

For answers to your questions about cancer call our Cancer Information Nurses on **0808 800 4040** 9am till 5pm Monday to Friday

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