

Diagnosing Hairy Cell Leukaemia - A Quick Guide



Contents

This is a brief summary of Diagnosing hairy cell leukaemia. You will find more detailed information on the website.

In this information there are sections on

- Tests for hairy cell leukaemia
- Questions for your doctor

Tests for hairy cell leukaemia

Going to your GP

If you have worrying symptoms, you usually begin by seeing your family doctor. Your GP will examine you, ask about your general health and ask about your symptoms. Your GP may order a blood test. Some people with HCL don't have any symptoms and sometimes doctors diagnose hairy cell leukaemia by chance, after a routine blood test at the hospital.

If your GP suspects that you have leukaemia, he or she will suggest you go and see a specialist called a haematologist. Haematologists are doctors who treat diseases of the blood. Your haematologist will need to order some tests. These might include blood tests, and an ultrasound or CT scan of your liver and spleen.

You may also have bone marrow tests. The doctor puts a thin needle into one of your bones to draw out some of the liquid bone marrow in the centre. This is called a bone marrow aspiration. Often they use another needle to take a small sample of bone and marrow together. This is called a bone marrow biopsy. Usually, the doctor takes the samples from one of your hip bones using a local anesthetic.

Questions for your doctor about diagnosing hairy cell leukaemia

- What tests are you going to do?
- Why do I have to have them?
- What will the tests show?
- Will any of the tests be painful?
- Are there any risks associated with any of these tests?
- Can I eat normally before the tests?
- Can I bring someone with me while I am having these 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 it take to get the results of the test?
- Who will give me the results of the test?



Notes

More information

For more information about hairy cell leukaemia, 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

Adapted from Cancer Research UK's Patient Information Website CancerHelp UK in April 2012. CancerHelp UK is not designed to provide medical advice or professional services and is intended to be for educational use only. The information provided through CancerHelp UK and our nurse team is not a substitute for professional care and should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease. If you have, or suspect you may have, a health problem you should consult your doctor. © Cancer Research UK 2012. Cancer Research UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1089464) and in Scotland (SC041666)