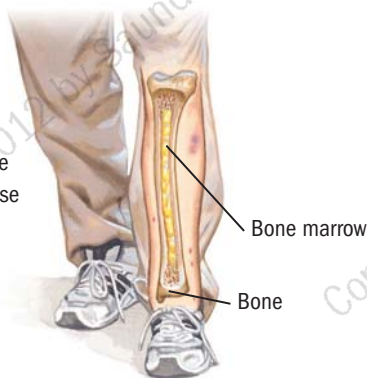


MANAGING YOUR ACUTE MYELOGENOUS LEUKEMIA



AML is the most common leukemia in adults, occurring in about 12 people per 100,000 population older than 65.

AML is a cancer of the white blood cells. These cells originate in the bone marrow.

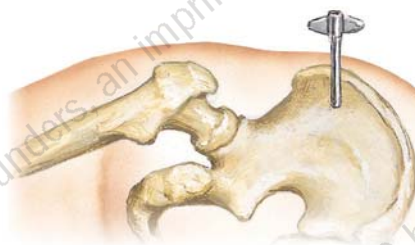
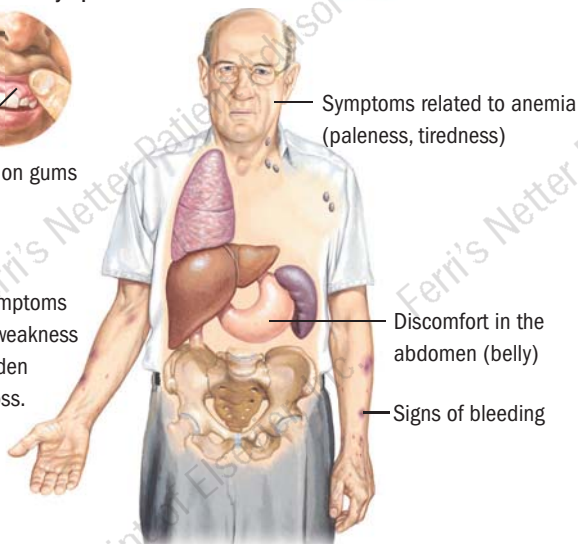


Symptoms of AML



Effects on gums

Other symptoms include weakness and sudden weight loss.



AML is usually found by examining the blood and performing a bone marrow biopsy. Marrow is removed from the bone and studied under a microscope.

What Is Acute Myelogenous Leukemia?

Leukemia is a cancer of the white blood cells. It originates in the bone marrow. Bone marrow is spongy tissue in the middle of bones. Blood cells form and develop in marrow and then move into the bloodstream. Leukemia can be acute and chronic. Acute leukemia affects white blood cells in bone marrow before they fully develop. Chronic leukemia affects fully grown cells. The four subcategories are acute myelogenous leukemia (AML), also known as acute myeloid leukemia, acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL), chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), and chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML). AML, the most common leukemia in adults, affects one type of white blood cells (these cells help fight infection).

What Causes AML?

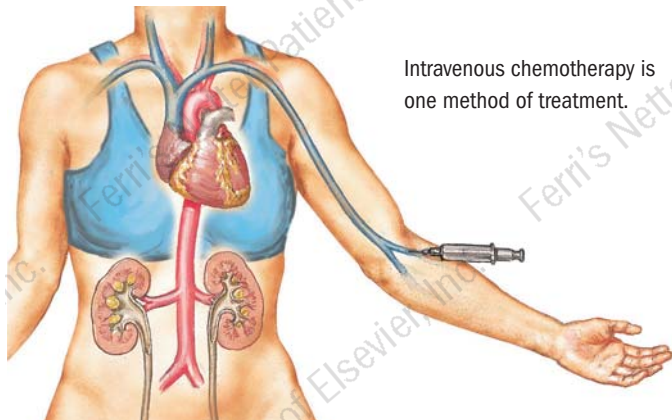
The cause is unknown. An increased risk of developing AML occurs after exposure to high doses of radiation, the chemical benzene, and drugs used to treat cancers and in people with certain genetic disorders. No effective way to prevent AML is known.

What Are the Symptoms of AML?

Common symptoms include paleness, weakness, shortness of breath, weight loss, and discomfort in the belly (abdomen). Tiredness, easy bleeding, bruising, and frequent infections result from fewer red blood cells (anemia), white blood cells, and platelets. Too many young and immature (poorly developed) white cells invade lymph nodes, liver, and spleen and cause swollen glands and enlargement of these organs. Bleeding from lungs, digestive tract, and brain can occur. AML can affect skin, gums, and linings of the spinal cord and brain.

How Is AML Diagnosed?

The doctor will use blood tests and perform a bone marrow biopsy. The biopsy involves removing marrow from bone and examining it under a microscope.



Intravenous chemotherapy is one method of treatment.

Talk to your doctor about bone marrow transplantation. Close relatives should be tested first because they are typically the best match.



Be sure you discuss ways to cope with any side effects of treatment with your doctor.



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How Is AML Treated?

A cancer specialist called an oncologist manages treatment. The goal is complete remission, so that no leukemia cells remain in blood or bone marrow after treatment. First, combination chemotherapy (induction therapy) is given. If needed, additional chemotherapy is used. Chemotherapy also affects normal cells, which can lead to anemia, easy bleeding, and frequent infections.

The doctor will examine the bone marrow after therapy. After complete remission, more chemotherapy is given to prevent leukemia's return (consolidation therapy).

The doctor may consider bone marrow transplantation, also called stem cell transplantation, at this point. Stem cells are the source of all blood cells. For a bone marrow transplant, healthy marrow containing stem cells is given to replace the abnormal marrow. Donors of healthy marrow are usually close relatives. Stem cells start to produce new blood cells without any leukemia cells.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing AML:

- ✓ **DO** understand that treatments vary and depend on factors such as age, genetics, and availability of donor marrow.
- ✓ **DO** get treated in a center with experienced blood specialists (hematologists).
- ✓ **DO** ask your doctor for help in coping with side effects.
- ✓ **DO** tell your doctor if you feel chest pain or shortness of breath during treatment.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you are bleeding or have a fever after you start chemotherapy.
- ⊘ **DON'T** miss follow-up appointments. They are extremely important to check for complete remission and for return of leukemia.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Inc.
Tel: (914) 949-5213, (800) 955-4572
Website: <http://www.leukemia-lymphoma.org>
- National Cancer Institute
Website: <http://www.cancer.gov>
- National Comprehensive Cancer Network
Website: <http://www.nccn.org>
- Children's Oncology Group/National Childhood Cancer Foundation
Website: <http://www.curesearch.org>