7 Common Symptoms of Leukemia

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Leukemia Symptoms

You will have undoubtedly heard the term leukemia and understand the severity of this blood-based cancer. Chances are, you will know someone who has suffered from this condition. You may have even lost a loved one.

Leukemia occurs when a person’s bone marrow cells divide and multiply at an excelled rate. This effectively prevents the body from producing red and white blood cells. These two cells are extremely important for the normal function of our body, hence why leukemia is so damaging.

It is estimated that leukemia accounts for 10 percent of new cancer cases diagnosed in 2018.

There are two types of leukemia: chronic and acute. Chronic leukemia is less aggressive and can be managed. Acute leukemia, on the other hand, is more damaging and harder to deal with. In either case, you should be aware of what symptoms to look out for. The sooner you can spot leukemia, the sooner it can be diagnosed and dealt with.

Seven Common Symptoms of Leukemia

The most common reported leukemia symptoms include fatigue, bruising, nausea, a pale complexion, increased bleeding, susceptibility to infections, and swollen lymph nodes. Below you will learn more about these leukemia symptoms in-depth.

Constant Fatigue

Everyone gets tired and fatigued. However, it is not normal for someone to be constantly fatigued. When this occurs, simple tasks and chores become a struggle.

You may find yourself falling asleep at random times during the day and be unable to fight off the tiredness. Exhaustion and fatigue to this degree could be a sign of leukemia.

Some research shows that leukemia could affect hormone levels and produce substances that reduce energy levels. If you are constantly fatigued, go see your doctor.

Bruising

We can bruise naturally during day to day activities. However, bruising too easily could be a symptom of a larger issue. If you notice a plethora of bruises that are consistent, you should see your doctor, especially if these bruises aren't related to a bump or are located in strange places.

Leukemia cancer cells push out platelets in our blood, which are a necessary component for blood clotting. If our

blood cannot clot, we bruise.

Frequent Nausea

Feeling nauseous is not a common occurrence. When we are nauseous, it is because we are sick. Usually it's because of food poisoning, motion sickness, or the flu.

However, if you have leukemia, you may experience nausea more frequently. This is due to cancerous cells inhibiting the formation of white blood cells. White blood cells are a key component of our body's ability to fight infection.

Pale Complexion

It is a common stereotype that those suffering from cancer look pale. This is based on fact. Acute leukemia causes rapid bone marrow cell division, which means your body has little time to do anything else. As cancer spreads, your body will struggle to replenish vital components such as red blood cells.

A lack of red blood cells is a condition known as anemia. It causes our skin to lose its natural healthy glow. If your skin turns pale, it could be a sign of leukemia. It could also just mean that you are anemic. A doctor can determine this through a simple blood test.

Increased Bleeding

In a similar manner to bruising, insufficient platelets can also cause increased bleeding. It is common to bleed from cuts and scrapes, but it is not common for those cuts to continue bleeding.

If you are bleeding excessively from small cuts (such as a paper cut), it could be a sign of leukemia. More serious signs could be bleeding gums, and excessive nosebleeds. If you experience any of these symptoms, seek medical care immediately.

Increased Susceptibility to Infections

As we have mentioned previously, leukemia can prevent or slow down the creation of white blood cells in our body. White blood cells are our first line of defense against ailments such as colds, the flu, and infections. As a result, leukemia can increase our susceptibility to infections, sore throats, and even pneumonia.

Moreover, it can increase the frequency of headaches and cause such things as skin rashes and mouth sores. Basically, if you usually have a strong immune system and notice an increase in these ailments, you should see your doctor.

Swollen Lymph Nodes

This is a symptom that is not as noticeable and has to be detected by an MRI or CT scan. If you notice small lumps underneath your skin, this could be a sign that your lymph nodes are swollen.

The swelling and lumps will typically appear in your throat, groin, or armpits. You should check regularly for lumps regardless, but lumps in these specific areas could be a symptom of leukemia.

What's Next?

If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, it is advisable to seek medical attention as soon as possible. This does not mean that you have leukemia; it just means that something is not quite right. The symptoms may be completely unrelated. However, it is always better to go for a check-up and receive a proper diagnosis.