

Media Information

About lymphoma

What is lymphoma?

- Lymphoma is the most common type of blood cancer in Australia¹
- Lymphomas are a family of around 40 cancers that develop when cells in the immune system called lymphocytes become cancerous²
- Lymphomas are divided into Hodgkin's lymphoma and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, both of which originate in the lymphatic system²
- Almost 90 percent of cases in Australia are non-Hodgkin's lymphoma³

How common is Lymphoma?

- Lymphoma can develop in anyone, of any age, at any time¹
- Every year more than 4,400 people are diagnosed with lymphoma, making it the fifth most common cancer in Australia (sixth most common type in men and fifth most common in women), and the most common blood cancer overall^{1,3}
- Lymphoma affects more women than ovarian and cervical cancers, and kills more Australians than melanoma³
- Lymphoma has one of the fastest rising incidence rates of any cancer^{1,3}

What causes lymphoma?

- Like many cancers, the cause of lymphoma is currently unknown⁴
- However, a number of factors have been shown to play a role including DNA damage, immunodeficiency and certain types of viral infections⁴

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Some symptoms of lymphoma are not easily recognisable and can be confused with everyday ailments such as a cold or influenza^{4,5}
- The most common symptoms of lymphoma are:⁴
 - Painless swelling in the neck, armpit or groin
 - Night sweats
 - Recurrent fever
 - Persistent lack of energy
 - Unintentional weight loss
 - Widespread itching

How important is early diagnosis?

- While lymphoma can be life-threatening, some forms are curable and a person's survival may be enhanced by early diagnosis and by recognising the common signs and symptoms⁵
- An early diagnosis is important because if left untreated, some types of lymphoma can be fatal within a short period of time⁵

Where should people go for further information?

- People worried about potential signs and symptoms of lymphoma should always go to their doctor for information and support in the first instance
- Health consumer organisations like Lymphoma Australia (www.lymphoma.org.au) and the Leukemia Foundation (www.leukaemia.org.au) offer support to cancer sufferers, their families and carers
- The internet provides a useful secondary tool for people to access further information and support

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References

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