

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

×



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

[Make an Appointment](#)

[Back](#)

[Leukemia in Children](#)

[Learn About Our Cancer Treatment](#)

[Refer a Patient](#)

ABOUT US

[Our mission, vision & core values](#)

[Leadership](#)

[History](#)

[Equality, diversity & inclusion](#)

[Annual report](#)

[Give to MSK](#)

your child with the most effective and personalized leukemia treatment.

Symptoms of Leukemia in Children

Leukemia can cause symptoms, such as:

fatigue (feeling tired), reported by more than 90 percent of children with leukemia

bone pain, which could make your child limp or refuse to walk

signs of bleeding, including bruising easily or seeing small spots of blood, called petechiae, under the skin

fevers that last for various amounts of time, with no apparent cause

repeated infections

an enlarged liver, spleen, or lymph nodes found during a doctor's exam, experienced by about 70 percent of children

Take your child to the doctor if any of these symptoms continue and don't seem to be going away.

What tests will my child have?

A blood test is the first test we will do. We'll examine your child's blood counts to see how many red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets are present, if the counts are in the normal range, and if there are any blood cells that look abnormal. Your child's doctor will also do a complete physical exam to look for any signs of leukemia, such as bruising, lumps, or an enlarged liver, spleen, or lymph nodes.

Not all children with leukemia have abnormal blood counts, but they may have other signs of leukemia found through a physical exam or by looking at their blood cells under a microscope. If your child's doctor suspects leukemia, we will remove a sample of bone marrow for analysis. We will place your child under anesthesia briefly to perform this test and will ensure that they are comfortable and relaxed.

Genetic testing is also done on a blood or bone marrow sample. Through the [MSK Kids Pediatric Translational Medicine Program](#), every child with leukemia has their cancer cells analyzed for genetic mutations. This process is called genomic profiling. It may provide valuable clues that our doctors can use to refine and improve the diagnosis, define the response to therapy, monitor your child, and find the most-effective treatments, including targeted therapies. Because all of this testing can be done right here at MSK Kids, you'll get the results quickly. We know how anxious you are feeling and how important that is to you.

What are leukemia risk groups?

When we start treating your child, we are aiming for remission. That means the treatment has destroyed nearly all of the abnormal blood cells and the body is back to producing normal blood cells. But sometimes remission doesn't last. A risk group is a classification we assign to your child's leukemia. It indicates how likely it is that the cancer might come back after remission. We treat children with low-risk leukemia less intensively than those with high-risk leukemia. Your child's doctor will tell you which risk group your child's cancer is in and how it will affect the intensity of therapy.

New Patient Appointments

Call [833-MSK-KIDS](tel:833-MSK-KIDS) Available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (Eastern time)

[Make an Appointment](#)

PREVIOUS

[MSK Kids Lymphadenopathy Clinic](#)

NEXT

[Treatment for Children with Leukemia](#)

[Communication preferences](#)

[Cookie preferences](#)

[Legal disclaimer](#)

[Accessibility statement](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

[Price transparency](#)

[Public notices](#)

© 2024 Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center