

Childhood Leukemia: What Is ALL?

Childhood leukemia is a cancer of the white blood cells.

That may sound scary, but with treatment, most kids get better.

It may help to know what to expect as you start this journey.

Acute lymphoblastic leukemia or A-L-L is the most common type of childhood leukemia.

With A-L-L, the body makes too many unhealthy, or sick, lymphocytes...

which are a kind of white blood cell.

And while healthy white blood cells fight infections, these sick cells don't do their job.

And they can take over the body so that it can't make the normal blood cells that it needs.

That's why your child may have a fever or feel tired and sick.

Or why your child may bruise or bleed easily.

When A-L-L is diagnosed, you'll get a new doctor who specializes in and has experience treating childhood leukemia.

He or she will be part of a care team that will get treatment started as soon as possible.

There are several types of A-L-L.

Your doctor will come up with a specific treatment plan for your child and the type of A-L-L.

Treatment can include chemotherapy, other medicines, radiation, or a stem cell transplant.

It can also be a combination of any of these things.

Treating this type of leukemia may take several years.

Most children respond right away...

within 4 to 6 weeks...

but treatment may have to continue to keep the leukemia from coming back.

Other treatment options like gene therapy may be needed.

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Your doctor may talk to you about clinical trials.

Learning that your child has leukemia can feel like an ending.

But it's just the beginning of a journey...

one that many families have been on.

And most kids get better.

You don't have to do it alone.

Your cancer care team is there to treat your child and to support your family.

But what your child needs just as much as medical care...

is your love and hope.