

# Tips for Patients AT DIAGNOSIS



If you have been newly diagnosed with lymphoma and are looking for guidance, this tip sheet may help you communicate with your physician and treatment team throughout your cancer journey.\*

## Ask questions

- It is completely normal to feel confused or lost after receiving information from your doctor. Once you allow yourself time to let the diagnosis become real for you, don't be afraid to repeat your questions and ask for clarification. Some questions may include: "What type of lymphoma do I have?", "What can I expect over the next two months", "What are my treatment options", etc.

## Know your type of blood cancer<sup>1</sup>

- Lymphoma is a complicated disease that occurs when lymphocytes—white blood cells that help protect the body from infection and disease—begin behaving abnormally. Lymphoma is categorized into four stages:
  - Stage I** (early disease): the cancer is found only in a single lymph node OR in one organ or area outside the lymph node
  - Stage II** (locally advanced disease): the cancer is found in two or more lymph node regions on one side of the diaphragm
  - Stage III** (advanced disease): the cancer involves lymph nodes both above and below the diaphragm
  - Stage IV** (widespread disease): the cancer is found in several parts of one or more organs or tissues (in addition to the lymph nodes) OR it is in the liver, blood or bone marrow
- Lymphoma also has two main types – Hodgkin and Non-Hodgkin:
  - Hodgkin lymphoma** (HL) is a rare form of lymphoma with six subtypes
  - Non-Hodgkin lymphoma** (NHL) can be divided into two groups – indolent and aggressive<sup>2</sup>

## Establish your healthcare team

- When you are diagnosed with any type of lymphoma, remember that your doctor won't be the only healthcare professional working with you.
- Recognize your entire healthcare team (e.g., oncology nurses, social workers, etc.), know your team captain, and understand how and when each of them will be involved in your care.

**When diagnosed with iNHL, I told my physician about my daughter's wedding. He worked with me to develop a treatment plan that accommodated this special day. Because of this initial line of communication we've developed a relationship that made all the difference in the world.**

– Jane F., follicular NHL patient

## Voice your concerns

*Patients have a variety of concerns at the time of their diagnosis, but your physician may not always know what concerns you the most.\*\**

- If you are worried about something specific, raise it with your doctor. Remember if you do not share your concerns, fears or wishes with your doctors, they will have a difficult time tailoring information to your individual needs.

**For more information and support, please visit [www.FramingLifeWithLymphoma.org](http://www.FramingLifeWithLymphoma.org).**

1. "About Lymphoma." Lymphoma Research Foundation. Accessed at: <http://www.lymphoma.org/site/pp.asp?c=bkLTka0QLmk8E&b=6299689>.

2. "General Information About Adult Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma." National Cancer Institute. Accessed at: <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/treatment/adult-non-hodgkins/HealthProfessional/page1>.

\* Developed by the Cancer Support Community, with support from Teva Oncology, a team of healthcare professionals and lymphoma patients.

\*\* Based on a June/July 2010 survey of 150 hematologists/oncologists and 133 indolent lymphoma patients conducted online by Harris Interactive.



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