



# A-T Clinical Center at Johns Hopkins

## IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT: Ataxia-Telangiectasia (A-T) and Cancer Risk



Recurrent or persistent fever without explanation

Approximately 25% of all A-T patients will develop cancer. The vast majority of these cancers, called lymphomas and leukemias, arise in a specific type of white blood cell, a lymphocyte. They can occur at any age. At this time, there is no way to predict which A-T patients are most likely to develop cancer. In general, lymphomas first appear as masses or swellings in areas of the body where there are lymph nodes (neck, chest, and abdomen). They may cause recurrent fevers without other explanation (no cough, sore throat, etc.). The first symptoms of leukemia are easy bleeding or bruising, fevers, fatigue, pale appearance or bony pain.

### Screening:

Routine screening tests in the absence of symptoms have NOT been shown to be useful in making an early diagnosis of leukemia or lymphoma. Furthermore, the treatment and prognosis of these cancers generally depend on the properties (type) of the affected lymphocyte and not on the extent of disease at the time of diagnosis. That is, in contrast to some other cancers (colon, breast, and lung), it is not critical to diagnose lymphoma or leukemia at the earliest possible time. A complete blood count (CBC) and other blood tests should be performed at your doctor's direction if there are symptoms suggestive of lymphoma, leukemia or other cancer.

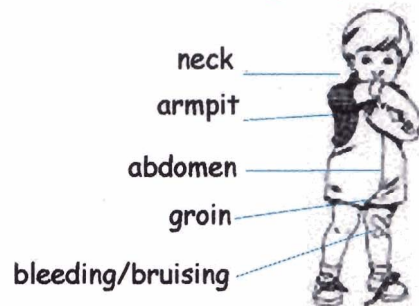
### Treatment:

Leukemias and lymphomas are TREATABLE, and there are effective chemotherapeutic agents that can be utilized in A-T patients. It is strongly recommended that the treatment of cancer in A-T patients be supervised by an oncologist who is familiar with the specific problems of A-T patients.

### Common Warning Signs of Lymphoma and Leukemia

- Recurrent or persistent fever without explanation
- Bleeding
- Bruising
- Pale appearance
- Swollen lymph nodes in neck, armpits, groin, and abdomen
- Body aches and bone pain

### Enlarged Lymph Nodes



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