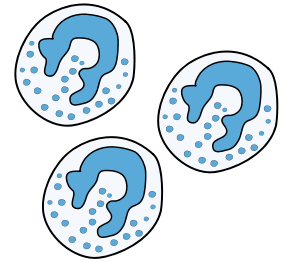


What is APL?

Acute promyelocytic leukaemia (APL or APML) is a fast-growing type of blood cancer. It develops when immature white blood cells grow and divide uncontrollably. They build up in your bone marrow and stop it making enough healthy blood cells. They also cause bleeding and blood clots.



White blood cells

APL is very rare. In the UK, about 170 people a year get it.

We don't know exactly what causes APL. It is not because of anything you have or have not done.

APL can cause signs and symptoms such as:



Bleeding, like nose bleeds, bleeding gums or blood in your pee or poo



A rash of tiny dots that doesn't fade when you press on it



Bruising when you wouldn't usually



Feeling tired, breathless or dizzy



Infections that last a long time or keep coming back



Blood clots in your lungs, brain or legs



Liver or kidney problems

You'll have blood and bone marrow tests to diagnose APL.






How is APL treated?

You will have:

- **Urgent treatment** to manage your risk of serious bleeding.
- **Induction treatment** to get rid of as many leukaemia cells as possible. This lasts about 2 months. You have it in hospital at first. You might be able to have it as an outpatient once your condition is stable.
- **Consolidation treatment** to kill any leukaemia cells that may be left behind. You usually have it as an outpatient. It lasts around 7 months.



The main treatments you might have are:

-  **ATRA**, also known as tretinoin. This comes as capsules that you take by mouth twice a day.
-  **ATO**, also known as arsenic trioxide. You have it through a drip into a vein a few days a week.
-  **Transfusions of blood cells and blood products** to manage bleeding and clotting problems.
-  **Chemotherapy**. You might have this if your white blood cell count is high. You may only need two doses.
-  **Medicines** to prevent and treat symptoms and side effects.

Your haematology team might suggest different treatment, depending on your circumstances. They will explain what they recommend for you.

This information is aimed at people in the UK. We do our best to make sure it is accurate and up to date but it should not replace advice or guidance from your health professional.

For [more information about APL](#), follow the link, search 'APL' at www.leukaemiacare.org.uk or scan the QR code. This also includes links to order free information in print.

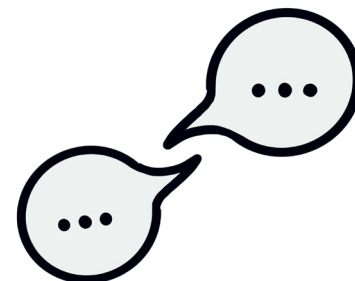


Need help? We offer a range of [support services](#). To find out more, scan the QR code, follow the link or search 'support for you' at leukaemiacare.org.uk



Want to talk about APL?

- Call our freephone helpline on **08088 010 444** (weekdays 9am to 4.30pm)
- Send a WhatsApp to **07500 068065** (weekdays 9am to 5pm)
- Visit www.leukaemiacare.org.uk
- Email support@leukaemiacare.org.uk



If you'd like to comment on our content or have a list of the sources we used for this factsheet, please get in touch. Email information@leukaemiacare.org.uk or call **08088 010 444**. Or complete our [short survey](#) to let us know what we can improve.