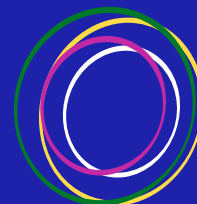


CAR T-cell therapy



For acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL)

CAR T-cell therapy is a type of personalised cancer treatment. It involves modifying your own blood cells so they can recognise and kill cancer cells. It's an intensive treatment that takes place at specialist centres. This may not be your usual hospital.

Your doctor might recommend CAR T-cell therapy if you have B-cell ALL that has not responded or has come back after treatment.

They'll explain the benefits and risks so you can make an informed decision. You'll have time to discuss it with people close to you and ask questions. You'll also have tests to check it's suitable for you and that you're well enough to have it.

CAR T-cell therapy involves a few steps:



Collecting your T cells. This usually happens at your CAR T centre. It takes a few hours.



Making the CAR T cells. Your cells are sent to a specialist lab. It takes a few weeks.



Keeping your ALL under control. You may need treatment to keep your leukaemia stable while you wait for your CAR T cells.



Preparing for the CAR T cells. This involves a short course of chemotherapy. You usually have it about a week before having your CAR T cells.



Having the CAR T cells. This only takes a few minutes.



Monitoring for complications. Most people stay in hospital for at least 10 to 14 days. You'll have frequent checks and blood tests during this time.

After you leave hospital, you need to stay nearby until 28 days after having your CAR T cells. You must have an adult with you during this time.

If you don't live near your CAR T centre, you'll need accommodation. Your hospital should be able to arrange this. Or Leukaemia Care can help.



Complications of CAR T-cell therapy

CAR T-cell therapy can have serious side effects or complications. The most common ones are low blood counts, nervous system problems and a complication called cytokine release syndrome. Your team will monitor you closely so they can start treatment quickly if you need it.

Your team will explain what to look out for. Tell them straight away if you have any symptoms or feel unwell.

After CAR T-cell therapy

Recovery takes time, and you'll probably feel very tired. Many people start to feel better after a few months but everyone's recovery is different.



When you go home, you'll still have lots of medicines to take. You may need blood transfusions too, so you might keep your central line for a while.



You'll have frequent check-ups with your team. And it's not unusual to need to go back to hospital to deal with a complication or side effects.



You'll need to take care to reduce your risk of infection, too.



Try not to expect too much of yourself at first. Build up your activity levels slowly and rest when you need to.

Need support or information?

- Scan the QR code or visit leukaemiacare.org.uk
- Call our freephone helpline on 08088 010 444
- Send a WhatsApp to 07500 068065
- Email support@leukaemiacare.org.uk



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 from your health professional. If you have any feedback or you'd like a list of our sources, please email information@leukaemiacare.org.uk.

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