

## Treatment-free remission (TFR)

**It is important not to stop taking your treatment without discussing it with your haematology team.**

Some people with chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML) might eventually be able to stop treatment. This is called treatment-free remission (TFR). It is when your CML stays under control without the need to keep taking medicines.

It might be possible if:

- You've been taking tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKIs) for at least 3 years (ideally 5 years) **AND**
- Your CML has been in deep molecular response for at least 2 years

If TFR is an option for you, your haematology team should discuss it with you. You should decide together whether it's something you'd like to try.

**Around 50 or more in every 100 people who try TFR keep their molecular response. But up to 50 in every 100 people may lose their response.**

### Benefits of TFR

- Your CML might stay under control without having to take any TKI medicines.
- You do not have to remember to take medicines every day.
- You are not at risk of getting any side effects.
- If you are hoping to get pregnant, TFR might give you the chance to do this safely and stay off TKI treatment during your pregnancy.

### Drawbacks of TFR

- Your CML might not stay under control. If this happens, restarting TKI treatment is usually very effective.
- You will have more blood tests and follow-up visits so your haematology team can monitor your CML closely.
- You may get treatment discontinuation syndrome. This consists of muscle pain and joint stiffness. It affects around 20 to 30 in every 100 people who stop TKIs. It usually goes away on its own, but some people might need a short course of treatment.
- You may feel anxious about your CML coming back, particularly around the time of your blood tests.

## What does TFR involve?

If you and your haematology team agree that TFR is right for you, they will explain what the process will involve.

You might stop your TKI treatment straightaway, or you might take a half-dose for a year before stopping treatment. This may improve the chance of your CML staying under control once you stop treatment.

If you try TFR, you have regular blood tests and check-ups to monitor your response. These are usually every month at first. They gradually get less frequent the longer you are on TFR.



## If your CML does not stay under control

If you lose your molecular response, restarting TKI treatment is usually very effective. Most people restart the same TKI they were on before, but your haematologist might suggest a different one.



**"If you want to come off any medication, really talk about it. Ask any questions you have, no matter how silly you think they are, and they will always be answered, and you will be supported. If you are not ready to make a big change, don't do it. The medical professionals are there for you and any decisions you make."**

**Vickie, diagnosed with CML**

For [more information about CML](https://www.leukaemiacare.org.uk), follow the link, search 'CML' at [www.leukaemiacare.org.uk](https://www.leukaemiacare.org.uk) or scan the QR code. This also includes information on ordering free booklets via our online shop.



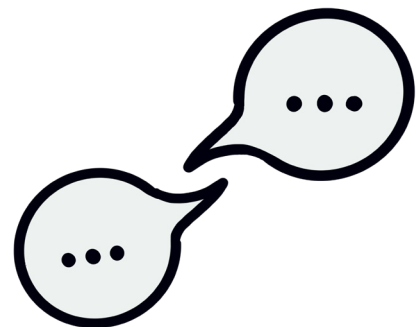
If you have any feedback, or you'd like a list of the references we used to create this factsheet, please email [information@leukaemiacare.org.uk](mailto:information@leukaemiacare.org.uk) or call **01905 755977**.

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