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# Leukemia Lawyers and Information

A cancer diagnosis is physically, mentally and emotionally overwhelming and one of the most traumatic events in a person's life. If you've recently received confirmation of a serious, life-threatening illness like leukemia, you deserve answers to your questions and support in your struggle for recovery.

Simply put, the devastating disease known as leukemia is cancer of the blood, caused by a mutation in a cell of the bone marrow. The bone marrow, a spongy tissue inside the center of large bones, is one of the most important tissues of the human body, for it manufactures, regulates, and controls the amount of blood in the human body. Injury to the bone marrow through accident, genetics, or external exposure to harmful chemicals such as benzene is a serious threat to the health of the victim.

## Bone marrow and leukemia

Bone marrow is comprised of stem cells, basic cells that grow and mature into virtually any type of cell that the body needs. Stem cells in bone marrow mature into three type of blood cells; red blood cells, which carry oxygen to organs and tissues, white blood cells that fight off infection and disease, and platelets, which aid in the clotting of blood. When leukemia damages stem cells, the bone marrow produces either irregular amounts of white blood cells or primitive cells that never mature into the type the body needs. In rare cases they fail to produce anything at all. If the cells are cancerous, they can potentially spread cancer through the blood into any tissue or organ. This is why leukemia is so dangerous; it can easily spread its cancerous cells because it has direct access to the bloodstream.

## Leukemia is generally divided into two types:

- **Myelogenous**, where stem cells fail to develop into blood, or
- **Lymphocytic**, which causes the bone marrow to overproduce unhealthy white blood cells.

These two types are further broken down into chronic or acute afflictions:

- **Acute leukemias** need direct treatment, for they dramatically impact health and can cause immediate death.
- **Chronic leukemias** often go undetected for years and sometimes decades, until enough malignant cells build up to form a "blast crisis," which is a sudden release of malignant cells from the bone marrow, similar to acute forms of the disease.

The four most common types of leukemia are:

- **Acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL):** This disease is often called childhood leukemia, although it can affect adults, especially if they are 65 and older.
- **Acute myelogenous leukemia (AML):** previously called acute nonlymphocytic leukemia, this is the most common type of leukemia in adults.
- **Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL):** common in people over 55. It is rare to find this type of leukemia in children.
- **Chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML):** Occurs mostly in adults, but a few children have had this disease as well.

## Common Causes of Leukemia

One of the most common causes of leukemia is exposure to the chemical benzene. Benzene exposure causes mutations in the DNA of the bone marrow, which results in defects in the type and amount of blood cells it can produce. Benzene is one of the most widely produced chemicals in the United States, as it is found in gasoline, paper production, cigarettes, and many forms of manufacturing. Even though the federal government strictly regulates the levels of benzene in the environment, many people are still at significant risk of developing leukemia due to benzene exposure.

## Benzene attorneys help victims of leukemia

Unfortunately, leukemia is one of the deadliest cancers. Even though technology is improving the quality of life for many victims, average survival rates rarely top 50%. These numbers depend greatly on a number of factors, such as the age of patient, type of leukemia, and stage of the disease, but in any case victims of leukemia face a long, difficult road. Future technology and clinical studies offer much promise, and tomorrow will be better than today.

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