

Watch and wait: what you need to know

This fact sheet explains key things to know about the ‘watch and wait’ approach to treatment, such as why it may be recommended, how often appointments may be and where to get support.



**Blood
cancer
UK**

How we can help

We're a community dedicated to beating blood cancer by funding research and supporting those affected. We offer free and confidential support by phone or email, free information about blood cancer, and an online forum where you can talk to others affected by blood cancer.



bloodcancer.org.uk
forum.bloodcancer.org.uk



0808 2080 888
(Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri: 10am–4pm, Wed: 10am–1pm)



support@bloodcancer.org.uk

What is watch and wait?

If you have a slow-growing blood cancer, instead of starting treatment straight away, you and your doctor may agree to 'watch and wait'. This means you'll have regular check-ups and blood tests so doctors can monitor your condition.

How often will my appointments be?

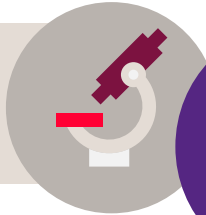


The length of time between your check-ups could be anything from once every few weeks to once a year.

Why is it recommended?

Watch and wait doesn't mean that you can't be treated – it's offered when your doctor believes there's no added benefit to starting treatment straight away.

More than
40 years
of research



has shown it's
safe if you have
no worrying
symptoms.

Who is on watch and wait?

5,000

people are
expected to go
on watch and
wait in the UK
each year.

27,000

people are
currently
monitored
in this way.



That's **13%**
of everyone
with **blood**
cancer.

Which symptoms should I look out for?

Everyone is different, but you should tell your doctor if you notice:



unexplained tiredness



new painless swellings or growing lumps



unexpected weight loss



frequent infections.

When will I start treatment?

You'll only start treatment if and when you need it and some people never do.

Where do I go for support?

It's not unusual to feel anxious between your appointments – we're here if you need someone to talk to.



Go to **bloodcancer.org.uk/watch-and-wait**

or call us free on **0808 2080 888**

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Notes:

**“I try to take something
positive from every
single day.”**

Kate, currently on watch and wait



About this fact sheet

We have produced this fact sheet in collaboration with expert medical professionals and people affected by blood cancer. Thank you to Dr Sajir Mohamedbhai, Dr Sally Moore and Dr Kevin Boyd for their support checking the content of this fact sheet.

Our fact sheets contain general information. Always listen to the advice of your specialist about your individual condition because every person is different.

A list of references used in this fact sheet is available on request.
Please email information@bloodcancer.org.uk

Disclaimer

We make every effort to make sure that the information in this fact sheet is accurate, but you shouldn't rely on it instead of a fully trained clinician. It's important to always listen to your specialist and seek advice if you have any concerns or questions about your health. Blood Cancer UK can't accept any loss or damage resulting from any inaccuracy in this information, or from external information that we link to.

The information in this fact sheet is correct at the time it was published (November 2017).
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Because we face it together

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Get in touch for:

- free and confidential support by phone or email
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Your feedback on this fact sheet can help us improve – please send any comments to **information@bloodcancer.org.uk**

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