



Patient Power

What Are Common Symptoms of Hodgkin Lymphoma?

Joshua Brody, MD

Director of the Lymphoma Immunotherapy Program
Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Andrew Evens, DO, MSc, FACP

Director, Lymphoma Program
Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

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Andrew Schorr:

So, tell us the symptoms that come on for people. Some of this may be brand-new. Somebody's had weird symptoms, they said, "We think it's Hodgkin lymphoma." How does it present itself, Andy?

Dr. Evens:

In different ways, but I would say the most common way, interestingly, is painless lymph node growth, or lymphadenopathy is a term we use.

And, it can be somewhat subtle, and even take weeks to months to progress, often in the neck, but it can be in other areas, and that's probably one of the more common ways. Sometimes, there can be more systemic systems. There's a term we use in lymphoma called "B symptoms," which can indicate—drenching night sweats, unexpected weight loss, and high fevers. Not as common to see, but that's also a way. There's maybe some odd symptoms we see sometimes—weird itching in the absence of a rash that can happen as well.

Andrew Schorr:

So, Joshua, it sounds like for the patient who's having these symptoms, this less common disease—Hodgkin lymphoma—is not what somebody would go to right away and say, "That's what it is."

Dr. Brody:

It really isn't, and it's so common—more the rule than the exception—that someone will have a lump in the neck, and they'll see their primary care doctor.

And, the most common causes of lumps could be things like sore throats, where we get swollen lymph nodes as the result of a sore throat, and they'll say, "Oh, did you have a little bit of a sore throat?" and the patient will say, "Well, yeah, a little bit," and they'll sometimes just treat them for strep throat or something. And then, patients are very surprised a month later when it doesn't get better, and they eventually get a biopsy and show that this was Hodgkin.

They really shouldn't be that surprised. That is more common that it happens that way because, again, Hodgkin lymphoma is rare compared to common things. What I think is a huge source of anxiety for patients and their families when that's happened is, "Oh, we've lost time by virtue of this diagnosis not being made right away." The truth is by the time we catch

those, a few weeks here or there, the treatments are still extremely effective, so it really shouldn't be such a source of anxiety for patients and their families.

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