



Monitoring CLL Progression: How Long Can Watch and Wait Last?

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Andrew Schorr:

Jackie, how long can this watch and wait period go? I have one friend in Seattle, he's been in watch and wait for the same 22 years that I've undergone treatment. It's very variable, right?

Dr. Broadway-Duren:

It's very variable, so it can go on for years, as you stated. So it's individualized depending on the patient and all the different factors that we discussed and what those are.

Andrew Schorr:

Right. So wouldn't it be a shame if you're so overwrought with anxiety and you've got four years, five years, 10 years, two, whatever it is, and you've wasted today or tomorrow—I don't mean to be a psychologist, I'm not, but I'm just saying that's what—I've been around this a lot, is how to go on.

So one last question for Phil and then we're going to wrap up a little bit and we have a lot more CLL programs coming. Joe, we got a question in and he asked it, Deborah said in the watch and wait is there anything I can do as a patient to slow progression?

Dr. Thompson:

Yeah, well, that's an interesting question, and I think people have probably done some research about some supplements and things that they have been able to take that have activity against CLL. There was a clinical trial at the Mayo Clinic about using green tea extract. There's been some data to suggest that turmeric has some anti-CLL properties, so there are a lot of people out there that try these things. I have to say, you know, I would say that the—in clinical trial that was done at Mayo there was some anti-tumor activity seen though it was relatively modest. So some of these things probably work.

I do think they're kind of better to be formally studied in a clinical trial because a lot of chemotherapy drugs came from natural substances and it wasn't until they were kind of systematically studied that you worked out, A, how effective they are, and B, were there any unexpected side effects. So we really don't know if we take a huge dose of green tea extract or

turmeric, is it going to potentially have some side effects. But I don't generally recommend for people take those things. If people are already taking them I don't tell them that they have to stop unless they're having other treatment.

I always tell people to exercise. I think it's super important. Right across oncology people, do better from cancer—cancer-associated outcomes if they're fit. And I also think it's just good general advice. I tell people to keep a good relationship with their primary care provider and get all of their regular health screening done because some people get so focused on their leukemia that they forget about everything else. And I say, I've had to say to patients before I say, you know, you have all of these cardiac risk factors, you know. I'm going to be really mad at you if I've cured your CLL and you die from a heart attack. So I tell people to focus on all of those things.

And then I--you know, a lot of people want to know is there a specific diet that I can eat that might be helpful, and it's a hard question to answer because there's a bit of a lack of systematic evidence. But for example we have been trying to do a clinical trial for a number of years with an extract that you get from cruciferous vegetables like watercress. It's called PEITC. It has a very long name.

But there are probably many things in our diet that can help prevent cancer, and I think that's been shown with vegetarians versus non-vegetarians and things like that, but once you actually have a cancer it's likely, it's hard to eat enough broccoli or enough watercress to get pharmaceutical amount of this stuff to actually do something significant to the disease. But I do tell people I don't want you to eliminate food groups. I want you to eat a generally healthy, balance diet and look after your weight because overall the prognosis from CLL is so good that you have to kind of continue to look after the rest of your health. It's not a ticket to drinking a bottle of wine a night and a one-pound steak every night.

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