

MRD

Minimal
Residual
Disease



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

You or your loved one has been diagnosed with a type of blood cancer. An important term your doctor may use is “minimal residual disease” (MRD). What does it mean and how does it apply to you?

This fact sheet will help you:

Learn about
minimal residual
disease

Find out what it
means for you

Learn about
testing



What is MRD?

When you have minimal residual disease, a small number of cancer cells remains in your body after your treatment ends. There can be so few cancer cells that you don't have any physical signs or symptoms.

Regular types of testing often can't detect the small number of cells that remain in your body after treatment. If you have MRD, it means these cells are present in your body.

Your healthcare team will do specialized testing on a sample of your bone marrow or blood to find out if you have MRD.

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- About MRD**
- Doctors use MRD to estimate the risk of your cancer returning.
 - MRD can happen because your treatment did not kill all cancer cells, or the cancer cells became resistant or did not respond to treatment.
 - If you are **MRD-negative**, it means that very sensitive tests could not detect cancer cells in your body. This is linked to a lower risk of the cancer returning. For some blood cancers, you may have a longer remission time, but it does not mean your cancer is cured.
 - If you are **MRD-positive**, you may need further treatment or a different type of treatment to destroy the remaining cancer cells.





What MRD testing can answer

Your healthcare team will decide whether to test for MRD based on specific factors that apply only to you. You may be tested at different points during your treatment, such as after a chemotherapy cycle or a bone marrow transplant.

MRD testing can answer a lot of questions for your doctor, including:

- How well the cancer has responded to treatment
- How much cancer remains in your body
- If you are at high risk for relapse
- If you need to restart treatment
- If you may benefit from other treatments

Specialized testing can detect very small numbers of cancer cells. It can find one cancer cell in 100,000 to 1 million cells.



Questions to ask your healthcare team

Your healthcare team includes your doctor and nurse. To make sure you receive the best care, be open and honest with your treatment team.

Here are some questions you may want to ask:

- Do I need MRD testing for my type of cancer?
- What tests will I need?
- How often will I need to do testing, both during and after treatment?
- How long will it take to get results?
- How will the results affect my treatment?



Finding that you are MRD-positive can be overwhelming. Seek medical help if you are feeling “down” or “blue” or don’t want to do anything and your mood does not improve over time. These could be signs of depression, an illness that should be treated even when you’re undergoing treatment. Treatment for depression has important benefits for people living with cancer. Remember, you are not alone.

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