

Lymphoma - Non-Hodgkin - Symptoms and Signs [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 11/2014

ON THIS PAGE: You will find out more about body changes and other things that can signal a problem that may need medical care. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Although people with NHL may experience a variety of symptoms, many, especially those with follicular lymphoma, small lymphocytic lymphoma, marginal zone lymphoma, and indolent subtypes, will have no symptoms at all. Many symptoms can also be caused by conditions other than lymphoma. There are very few symptoms that are specific to lymphoma, and this explains why it sometimes can be difficult to make a diagnosis. If you are concerned about one or more of the symptoms or signs on this list, please talk with your doctor. The symptoms of NHL depend on where the cancer started and the organ that is involved.

General symptoms:

- Enlarged lymph nodes in the abdomen, groin, neck, or underarms
- Enlarged spleen or liver
- Fever that cannot be explained by an infection or other illness
- Weight loss with no known cause
- Sweating and chills
- Fatigue

Examples of symptoms related to a specific tumor location:

- A tumor in the abdomen can cause a stretched belly or pain in the back or abdomen.
- A tumor in the center of the chest may press on the trachea and cause chest pain, difficulty breathing, or other respiratory problems.

Your doctor will ask you questions about the symptoms you are experiencing to help find out the cause of the problem, called a [diagnosis](#) [3]. This may include how long you've been experiencing the symptom(s) and how often.

If lymphoma is diagnosed, your doctor may also use certain symptoms to help describe the disease, called [staging](#) [4]. For many decades, each stage of NHL was subdivided into ?A? and ?B? categories based on specific symptoms listed below. However, the most recent staging

system published in 2014, known as the Lugano Classification, has removed these categories because they do not necessarily affect treatment.

A means that a person has not experienced B symptoms, listed below.

B means that a person has experienced the following symptoms:

- Unexplained weight loss of more than 10% of their original body weight during the six months before diagnosis
- Unexplained fever with temperatures above 100.4° F (38° C)
- Drenching night sweats. Most patients say that either their nightclothes or the sheets on the bed are actually wet. Sometimes, heavy sweating occurs during the day.

Once NHL has been diagnosed and staged, relieving symptoms remains an important part of cancer care and treatment. This may also be called symptom management, palliative care, or supportive care. Be sure to talk with your health care team about symptoms you experience, including any new symptoms or a change in symptoms.

The next section helps explain what tests and scans may be needed to learn more about the cause of the symptoms. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Diagnosis, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.

Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/lymphoma-non-hodgkin/symptoms-and-signs>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19213>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19214>