Waldenström's Macroglobulinemia - Staging [1]

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ON THIS PAGE: You will learn about how doctors usually describe a cancer?s growth or spread, called the stage, and how this differs for Waldenstrom?s macroglobulinemia. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Staging is a way of describing where the cancer is located, if or where it has spread, and whether it is affecting other parts of the body. Doctors use diagnostic tests to find out the cancer's stage, so staging may not be complete until all the tests are finished. Knowing the stage helps the doctor to decide what kind of treatment is best and can help predict a patient's prognosis, which is the chance of recovery. There are different stage descriptions for different types of cancer.

There is no standard system for staging Waldenstrom?s macroglobulinemia. Instead, doctors may look at several factors to determine a prognosis, such as:

- the severity of a patient?s anemia [3]
- a low level of red blood cells
- the amount of IgM in the blood
- the amount of a protein in the blood called beta-2-microglobulin

People with low beta-2-microglobulin levels and normal hemoglobin?the protein that carries oxygen in a red blood cell?typically have a better prognosis.

Information about the cancer?s stage will often help the doctor recommend a treatment plan. The next section helps explain the treatment options for this type of cancer. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Treatment Options, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/waldenstrom%E2%80%99s-macroglobulinemia/stages
[2] http://www.cancer.net/about-us
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/25242