

# Hodgkin lymphoma

This page gives you an overview of Hodgkin lymphoma – what it is, who might get it and the different types of Hodgkin lymphoma.

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## What is Hodgkin lymphoma?

Hodgkin lymphoma is a type of blood cancer that develops when **lymphocytes** (a type of white blood cell) become out of control. They divide in an abnormal way or do not die when they should.

There are two types of lymphocyte: B lymphocytes (**B cells**) and T lymphocytes (**T cells**). Lymphocytes normally fight infection as part of the body's **immune system**. They are carried around the body in the **lymphatic system** and can collect in the lymph nodes (glands) or other parts of the body. Hodgkin lymphoma almost always develops from B cells. It is named after Dr Thomas Hodgkin, who was the first person to describe the condition in 1832.

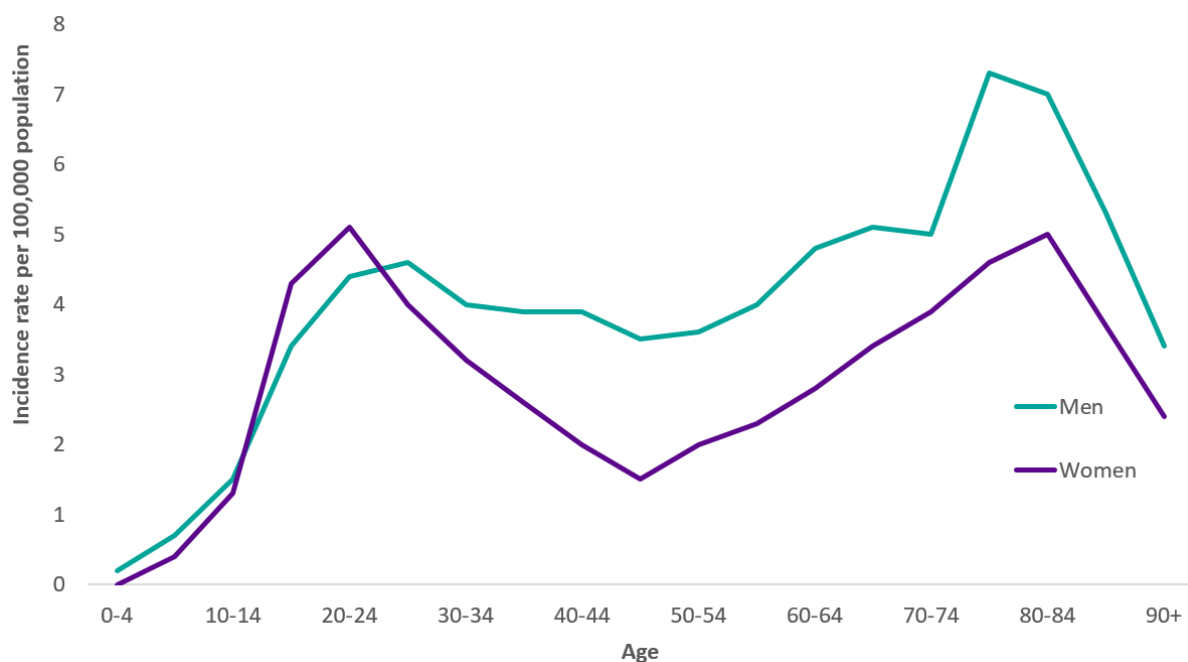
In Hodgkin lymphoma, particular types of abnormal cells, called Reed–Sternberg cells, can be seen under a microscope. **Non-Hodgkin lymphomas** do not contain this type of cell.

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## Who gets Hodgkin lymphoma?

Around 2,100 people are diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma each year in the UK – more than five a day. It affects slightly more males than females. The risk of getting Hodgkin lymphoma is similar for people of all ethnic backgrounds.

Hodgkin lymphoma can occur at any age, although most people diagnosed are between the ages of 15 and 34, or over 60. We have more specific information about [lymphoma in children and young people](#).



**Figure: Diagnosis of Hodgkin lymphoma according to age**

This graph shows the number of new cases of Hodgkin lymphoma in every 100,000 people in the UK each year (incidence rate). Even in the most commonly affected age groups, Hodgkin lymphoma is rare. On average, around 3 people in every 100,000 are diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma each year.

Treatment for Hodgkin lymphoma has improved dramatically over the last 40 years. Nowadays many people are diagnosed at an early stage and most are successfully treated.

**If you are worried that you might have lymphoma, or have any concerns about your health, contact your GP.**

# Types of Hodgkin lymphoma

There are two main types of Hodgkin lymphoma:

- **classical Hodgkin lymphoma** includes four subtypes, all of which are treated in the same way:
  - nodular sclerosis classical Hodgkin lymphoma
  - mixed cellularity classical Hodgkin lymphoma
  - lymphocyte-rich classical Hodgkin lymphoma
  - lymphocyte-depleted classical Hodgkin lymphoma
- nodular lymphocyte-predominant Hodgkin lymphoma (NLPHL) behaves differently, and is treated differently, from classical Hodgkin lymphoma. It is covered separately on our **[information page on NLPHL](#)**.

Most cases of Hodgkin lymphoma are classical Hodgkin lymphoma. Only around 1 in 10 cases is NLPHL.

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We have separate information about the topics in **bold font**. Please get in touch if you'd like to request copies or if you would like further information about any aspect of lymphoma. Phone **0808 808 5555** or email **[information@lymphoma-action.org.uk](mailto:information@lymphoma-action.org.uk)**.

## References

The full list of references for this page is available on our website. Alternatively, email **[publications@lymphoma-action.org.uk](mailto:publications@lymphoma-action.org.uk)** or call 01296 619409 if you would like a copy.

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