

A CLL EMPOWERMENT GUIDE

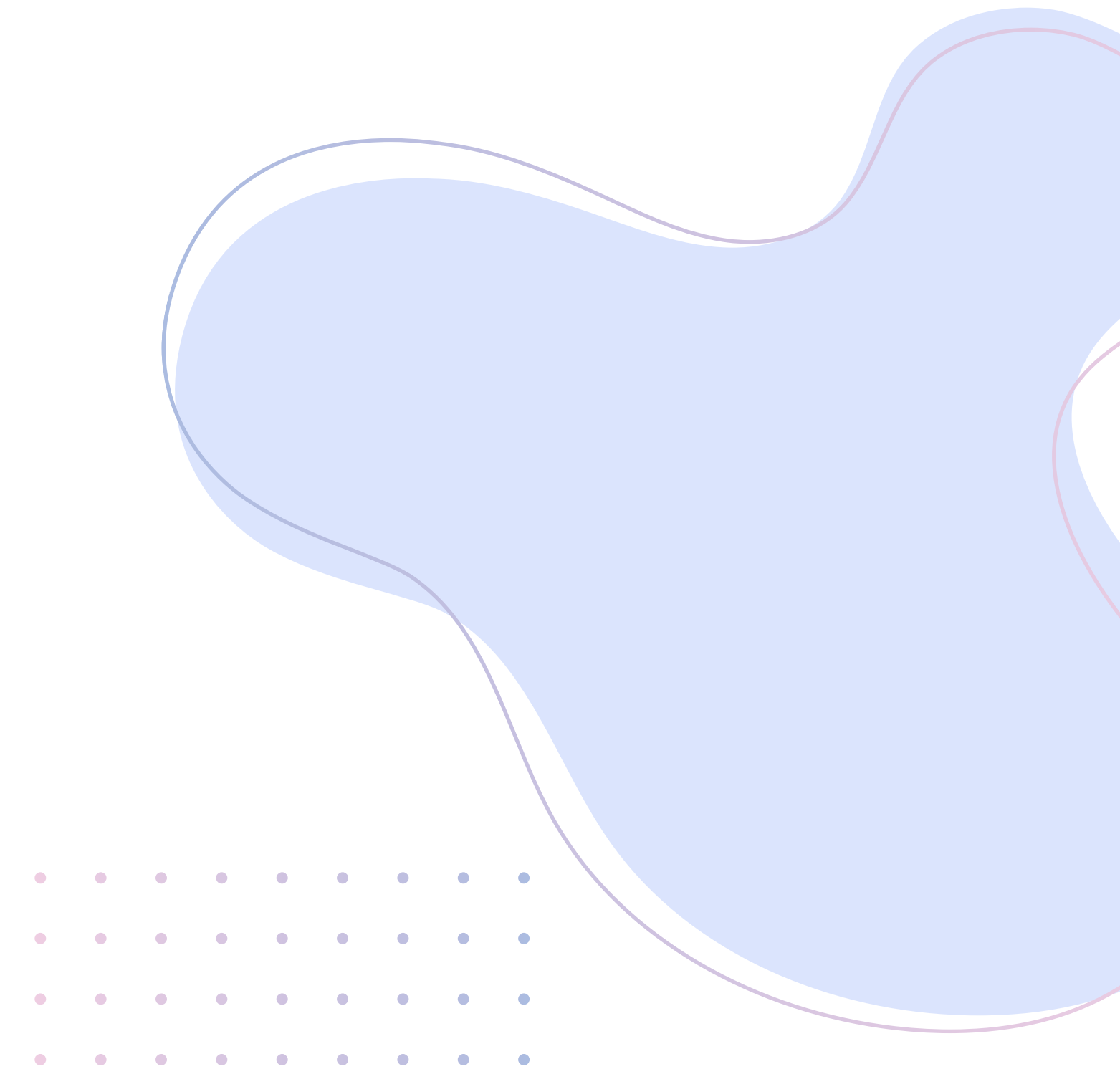
Complementary care & lifestyle modifications in CLL



Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL) patients often seek additional approaches to support their well-being in addition to standard medical care. Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) includes a range of practices, remedies, herbal supplements, and lifestyle modifications that may offer potential benefits.

WHAT IS COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE (CAM)?

CAM refers to a diverse range of practices and products that are not typically considered part of conventional medicine. It includes approaches such as herbal remedies, dietary supplements, emotional support practices, and lifestyle modifications.



HERBAL REMEDIES AND DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

Some herbs and supplements, such as green tea and turmeric, have been studied for their potential anti-inflammatory or immunomodulatory properties. However, it is crucial to consult with your healthcare provider before starting any new herbal remedy or supplement, as they may interact with medications or affect your CLL treatment.

Lifestyle modifications

Adopting a healthy and well-balanced diet is an essential step in self-care and managing CLL, along with its treatments. Embrace a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Opt for wholegrain options when possible and limit processed foods.

Alternative diets

Be wary of cancer alternative diets that you may find online. There is no scientific proof in favor of any particular diet being used to treat or cure cancer. Some of these diets may not provide a fully balanced and nutritious diet and could even be harmful. Always seek medical advice from a physician, nurse, or a registered dietitian before considering any alternative diet.

Hydration

Stay adequately hydrated, engage in regular physical activity as permitted by your healthcare provider, and aim for sufficient rest and sleep.



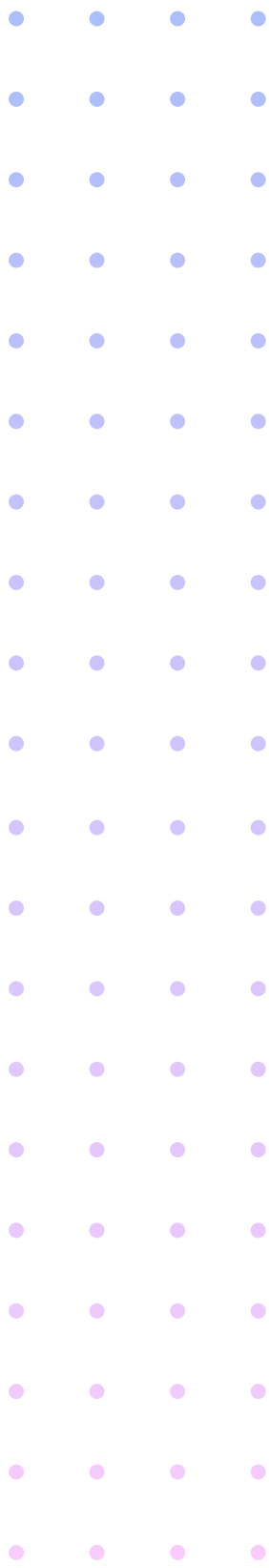
Neutropenia and food safety

During CLL treatments, your white blood cell count (neutrophils) may decrease, making you more susceptible to infections. In that case, you may need to follow specific dietary precautions: Store, handle, and prepare food safely to minimize infection risk. Avoid certain foods that may pose a higher risk of bacterial contamination, such as:

- Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, and seafood
- Unpasteurized dairy products and soft cheeses, such as brie
- Raw or lightly cooked eggs and foods containing raw eggs, like homemade mayonnaise
- Unwashed fruits and vegetables
- Unroasted nuts and dried fruits

By following these food safety guidelines and being mindful of the foods you consume, you can minimize the risk of infections and prioritize your well-being during treatment.

Remember to consult your healthcare team for personalized advice based on your individual medical condition.



MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Weight changes can be a concern for some CLL patients. If you are experiencing significant weight loss, consider advising your healthcare professional and a registered dietitian, as you may need to adapt caloric intake.

Consult your healthcare team for personalized guidance to support your weight management goals and overall well-being.



EXERCISE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Exercise can be beneficial for CLL patients, but it's essential to consider individual fitness levels and limitations. Here are some general suggestions:

Listen to your body and engage in exercises that match your capabilities. If you have other health conditions, it's advisable to consult your doctor before starting or adjusting your exercise routine.

Start gradually, begin with exercises that align with your current abilities. Avoid pushing yourself too hard to minimize the risk of injuries.

Remember, any form of physical activity, even at a comfortable level, can contribute to your overall well-being.

Always prioritize your safety and consult your healthcare team for personalized advice based on your specific medical situation

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AND SUPPORT

Recognize the significance of emotional well-being in navigating your CLL journey, and consider seeking support from various sources:

Religious or spiritual support

For individuals who find comfort in religion or spirituality, seeking support from their faith community or spiritual leaders can be beneficial in coping with CLL-related challenges.

Mental health professionals

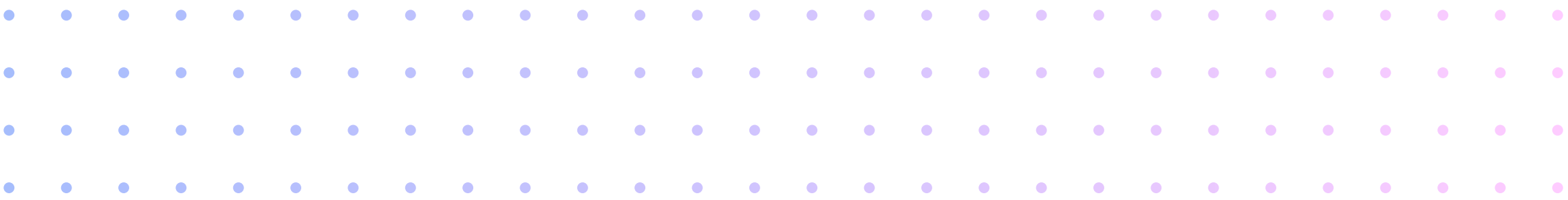
Reach out to qualified mental health professionals or counselors who can offer valuable guidance and emotional support tailored to your unique needs.

Support groups

Connect with others facing similar challenges by joining support groups. Sharing experiences and knowledge can provide a sense of belonging and understanding.

By seeking support from different avenues, you can better cope with the challenges of CLL and cultivate a positive outlook on your journey.

Remember, emotional well-being plays a vital role in your overall health.

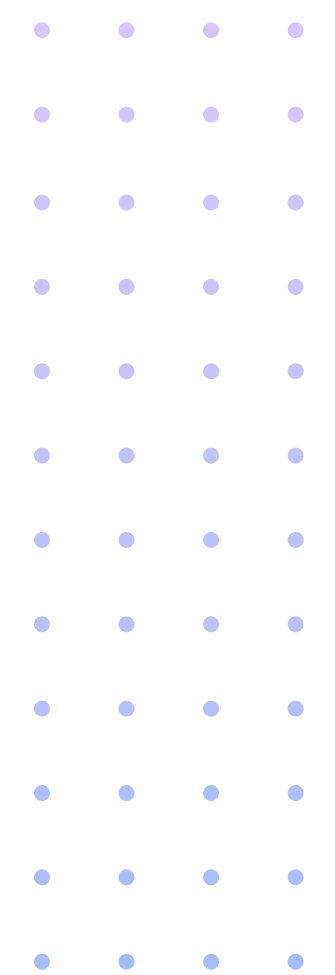


BALANCING CAM AND EXERCISE WITH CAUTION

While some CAM approaches may offer potential benefits, not all are scientifically proven, and some may even pose risks. **It is essential to discuss any CAM practices, remedies, or supplements with your healthcare provider before incorporating them into your CLL treatment plan.** Your healthcare provider can provide guidance, evaluate potential interactions or contraindications, and help you make informed decisions. Complementary and alternative approaches can potentially enhance well-being for CLL patients, but caution and safety are of utmost importance.

Similarly, when engaging in exercise, avoid overexertion, as it can lead to injuries and hinder your progress. Aim for a balanced and sustainable exercise routine. By exercising with caution and seeking guidance from your healthcare team, you can reap the benefits of physical activity while safeguarding your well-being.

*Remember, your healthcare provider
is there to support you in making
informed choices that align with your
overall health and CLL management*



This leaflet was created within the context of the "Patient Empowerment" Program, which is designed and implemented by the Institute of Applied Biosciences at the Center for Research and Technology Hellas (INAB|CERTH) and approved by the Hellenic Society of Haematology (HSH) and the European Research Initiative on CLL (ERIC)

