

# Acute Leukemia Program



# Comprehensive Care for Acute Leukemia

Our physicians are specially trained to treat acute leukemia and other complex blood cancers. Acute leukemia is a type of cancer that grows rapidly and causes bone marrow cells to not mature the way they should. The two most common types of acute leukemia are acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) and acute myeloid leukemia (AML).

## Faster, Lifesaving Treatment

With an acute leukemia diagnosis, time is of the essence. Cancer cells can multiply in as little as a few hours and are quick to spread to other parts of the body. At AdventHealth Cancer Institute, we offer a fast-track for these time-sensitive cases, getting patients in front of an acute leukemia expert quickly, which can be life-saving.



## Meet the acute leukemia experts.



**Juan Carlos Varela, MD**, is the Medical Director of the Blood and Marrow Transplant Program and a MD/PhD graduate of the Medical

University of South Carolina. He undertook his residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital, followed by fellowship training in hematology at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center. Dr. Varela's clinical interests include novel immune therapies for hematological malignancies as well as bone marrow transplantation and treatments for leukemia, lymphoma and multiple myeloma.



**Shahram Mori, MD, PhD**, is board certified in hematology/oncology and internal medicine. His research interests include immune

reconstitution and immune response within the bone marrow micro-environment following stem cell transplantation. He received his PhD from New Mexico State University and completed his post-doctoral fellowship in cancer immunology from MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.



**Rushang D. Patel, MD, PhD, FACP**, is a board-certified, fellowship-trained medical oncologist and hematologist, and the clinical leader of the

acute leukemia program. He has special interest in managing patients with acute leukemias, high-risk lymphoma and performing haploidentical transplants. Dr. Patel has conducted extensive research on cancer-causing toxic chemicals such as dioxin (Agent Orange), cigarette smoke and others, and holds a PhD from Penn State in Integrated Biosciences — Molecular Medicine.



## About Acute Leukemia

Acute leukemia occurs when a bone marrow cell develops errors in its DNA. The errors tell the cell to continue growing and dividing, when a healthy cell would normally stop dividing and eventually die. When this happens, blood cell production becomes abnormal and the bone marrow produces immature cells that develop into cancer.

## Acute Leukemia Navigator

Our acute leukemia navigator is a licensed clinical social worker who is here to help coordinate total patient care from initial referral to survivorship. Services include:

- Total coordination of patient care
- Assistance with patient referrals and transfers
- Help accessing resources including counseling, social work, and integrative and creative arts therapies

**For more information on our program or to speak with our navigator, call 407-303-2070.**

## Treatment Options

### CHEMOTHERAPY

Chemotherapy forms the backbone of treatment for most leukemias. Our team focuses on timely testing for DNA changes in your leukemia cells, which allows us to use the most focused treatments available and avoid the use of less effective drugs.

### STEM CELL TRANSPLANT

A stem cell transplant may be used as a procedure for people at high risk of relapse or for treating relapse when it occurs. This transplant allows someone with leukemia to re-establish healthy bone marrow by replacing leukemic bone marrow with leukemia-free marrow from a healthy person.

Also known as a blood and marrow transplant, a stem cell transplant begins with high doses of chemotherapy to destroy any leukemia cells. The marrow is then replaced by bone marrow from a compatible donor (allogeneic transplant). Using modern techniques like haploidentical treatment, we can find a donor for more than 90 percent of our patients.

### CLINICAL TRIALS

AdventHealth Cancer Institute participates in more than 100 trials each year. Our physicians are constantly working to find breakthroughs in hematologic cancer treatment through numerous blood and marrow, and leukemia trials. This dedication to discovery gives our patients unique access to innovative treatment methods.



## The Most Established Acute Leukemia and Stem Cell Transplant Program in Central Florida

AdventHealth Cancer Institute is home to one of the largest blood and marrow transplant programs in the Southeast United States — with a reputation for superior quality and outcomes.

- Dedicated floor for acute leukemia patients with clinical providers actively rounding on patients for any needs
- Multidisciplinary rounds conducted by physicians and infectious disease specialists, clinical pharmacists, pulmonologists and dietitians
- Dedicated hemo-pathologists for immediate, state-of-the-art testing on site
- Weekly conferences to review each patient's case with multiple pathologists, radiologists and other specialists to develop personalized treatment plans
- Access to five conveniently located infusion centers at AdventHealth hospitals across the region
- More than 1,500 stem cell transplants performed since the inception of the program

To learn more, call 407-303-2070 or visit [AdventHealthCancerInstitute.com/BMT](https://www.adventhealthcancerinstitute.com/BMT).



# AdventHealth

**Cancer Institute**  
**Blood and Marrow Transplant Program**  
407-303-2070  
[AdventHealthCancerInstitute.com/BMT](http://AdventHealthCancerInstitute.com/BMT)

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