

# Obinutuzumab (Plus Chlorambucil) for Newly Diagnosed Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia

## Who Might Benefit?

Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) is the most common adult leukemia in Western countries, representing approximately 3% of all new cancer cases each year in Canada. Most patients with CLL are older than 70 years of age, and many present with coexisting medical conditions.

### > Current Practice

There is no agreed standard treatment regimen for symptomatic CLL. Chemotherapy, considered the conventional therapy, involves the use of chemotherapy drugs that target and kill cancer cells. For previously untreated CLL patients who are in good health, aggressive chemotherapy with a combination of highly toxic drugs such as fludarabine, cyclophosphamide, and rituximab (FCR) has been shown to prolong patients' overall survival; however, for patients with coexisting medical conditions, limited treatment options are available. The common choices include drugs such as chlorambucil (with or without rituximab), bendamustine (with or without rituximab), ofatumumab (only in clinical studies), or reduced doses of FCR.

Combination therapy with obinutuzumab and chlorambucil, a new and effective option to treat newly diagnosed CLL patients with coexisting medical conditions

### > What's New?

Obinutuzumab is a new anti-cancer drug that works by stimulating the body's immune system to attack cancer cells. This drug targets white blood cells (called B lymphocytes) that have a surface marker known as CD20. The combination of obinutuzumab and chlorambucil has shown promise as a superior treatment option for CLL patients with coexisting medical conditions who had not received treatment previously.



### > Potential Advantages

For previously untreated patients with CLL who have coexisting medical conditions, obinutuzumab in combination with chlorambucil appears to be a more effective treatment compared with chlorambucil alone. The combination therapy demonstrates a large (84%) risk reduction in disease worsening or death. Obinutuzumab in combination with chlorambucil more than doubles the chance of living without disease progression in CLL patients. The common adverse events are reported to be generally manageable infusion-related reactions.