



Hodgkin's Lymphoma

Quick Reference Guide

2026

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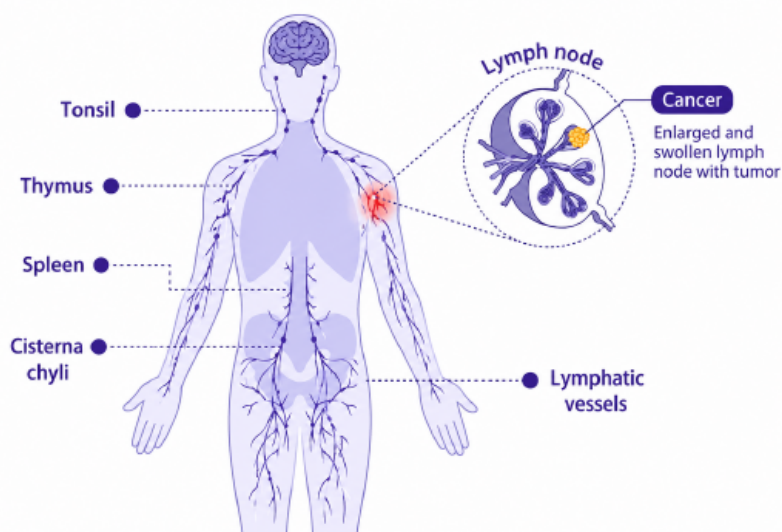
1 CLINICAL SNAPSHOT

Definition: **Hodgkin lymphoma (HL)** is a B-cell lymphoid malignancy defined histologically by **scattered malignant Reed-Sternberg cells** (large binucleated cells with 'owl-eye' nucleoli) within a reactive inflammatory background.¹⁻³ Two biologically and therapeutically distinct HL subtypes include **classical HL (cHL)** (>90%¹ of cases) and **nodular lymphocyte-predominant HL (NLPHL)**, an indolent CD20-positive form managed differently.^{1,2} Classical HL is further divided into **nodular sclerosis (NSHL, ~70% of cHL, more common in younger adults)**, **mixed cellularity (MCHL, ~20-25%, the subtype more common in older and HIV-positive patients and frequently EBV-positive)**, **lymphocyte-rich**, and **lymphocyte-depleted** subtypes.¹⁻³ The subtype axis carries real clinical weight and is **not interchangeable**: NLPHL and cHL differ in immunophenotype, treatment, and prognosis.^{2,3}

ICD-10 Codes:

HL is reported under category **C81**, which requires **three documentation axes** for full specificity:^{4,5} **(1)** histologic subtype (4th character), **(2)** anatomic site (5th character), and **(3)** disease status, active vs. in remission. Subtype codes are **C81.0x** (nodular lymphocyte predominant), **C81.1x** (nodular sclerosis), **C81.2x** (mixed cellularity), **C81.3x** (lymphocyte depleted), **C81.4x** (lymphocyte-rich), **C81.7x** (other), and **C81.9x** (unspecified, use only when subtype is genuinely unknown after pathology review).^{4,5} The **5th character** specifies site (e.g., .x1 head/face/neck, .x2 intrathoracic, .x8 multiple sites, .x9 extranodal/solid organ), and the **A suffix** (e.g., **C81.1A**) denotes oncologist-documented remission.^{4,5} **Z85.71** (personal history of Hodgkin lymphoma) carries no HCC value and should be used only when oncology has **definitively closed active surveillance**. Common co-managed conditions are **coded separately**: **I25.10** (atherosclerotic heart disease), **I50.-** (heart failure), **J44.-** (COPD), **J84.-** (interstitial lung disease), **E11.42/G63** (diabetic/other neuropathy), **N18.-** (CKD stage), and R-codes for frailty components (**R54** debility, **R26.-** gait abnormality, **R63.4** weight loss).^{4,5}

Lymphomas are cancers of the lymph nodes



Prevalence and Burden: HL is uncommon, with the American Cancer Society estimating approximately **8,920** new US cases and roughly **900 deaths** in 2026.⁶ Its hallmark is a **bimodal age distribution**, with incidence peaks at ages **20-30** and again at **50-70** years.^{2,3} This second peak is the clinically underappreciated, **Medicare-relevant population**: older adults account for

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