

# Langerhans cell histiocytosis (LCH) in Children

- Langerhans cell histiocytosis (LCH) is the most common of the histiocytic disorders and occurs when the body accumulates too many immature Langerhans cells, a subset of the larger family of cells known as histiocytes.
- Histiocytes are cells within the immune system that function as “phagocytes,” which means they ingest and remove foreign bodies like bacteria and debris. Langerhans cells are a type of white blood cell (immune cells) that normally help the body fight infections.
- In LCH, too many abnormal Langerhans cells are produced, together with other types of inflammatory cells, and these cells build up in certain parts of the body where they can form tumors or damage organs.
- LCH is believed to occur in 5 per million children per year, but any age group can be affected, from infancy through adulthood. In newborns and very young infants, it occurs in 1-2 per million each year. It is, however, believed to be under-diagnosed, since some patients may have no symptoms, while others have symptoms that are mistaken for injury or other conditions.
- It occurs most often between the ages of 1-3 years and may appear as a single tumor, or "lesion," (area of abnormal tissue or tumor) or can affect many body systems, such as skin, bone, lymph glands, liver, lung, spleen, brain, pituitary gland and bone marrow.
- Symptoms depend on the location and severity of involvement.
- LCH is usually diagnosed with a tissue biopsy, (when a sample of tumor material is taken with a medical or surgical procedure), in addition to other testing, such as x-rays and blood studies.
- A biopsy of a suspected LCH tumor is necessary to make a definitive diagnosis.

**Learn more about  
LCH and help us  
spread awareness!**

