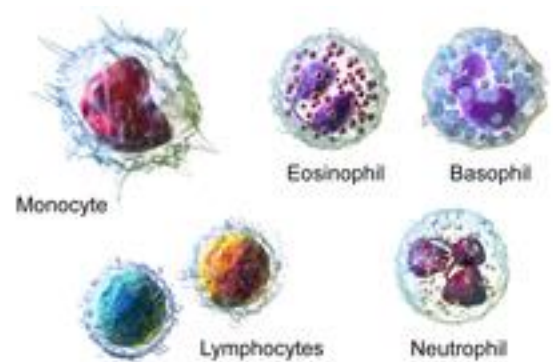


## White Blood Cells: A First Line of Defense

When your medical provider talks about white blood cells (WBCs), or leukocytes (lew-ko-sites), they are referring to the parts of your immune system that are made to fight war on your behalf. Key in the battle against infection and other diseases, WBCs are made in the bone marrow, the spongy substance in the middle of your bones. They are stored in your blood and your lymphoid tissues, which are the cells and organs of your immune system.

The five types of white blood cells are:

- **Granulocytes** (gran-you-low-sites) are the most common white blood cells. There are three types of granulocytes:
  - **Neutrophils** (new-tro-philz) attack bacteria.
  - **Eosinophils** (ee-o-sin-o-filz) kill parasites and cancer cells, and combat allergens.
  - **Basophils** (bay-suh-filz) combat allergens.
- **Monocytes** (maw-no-sites) fight germs and infection.
- **Lymphocytes** (lim-fuh-sites) fight viruses and make antibodies.



**White Blood Cells**

Your doctor checks the number of white blood cells in your blood to look for conditions like infection, inflammation, allergies, and leukemia. They may do this through a WBC count test, or a complete blood count (CBC) test. WBCs are considered to be at full fighting strength when the count is 3.4 billion to 9.6 billion a liter. If your test result is higher, your body may be fighting an infection or illness. A lower count may mean that your immune system isn't working as well as it should.