



What is Myeloma?

Most who develop myeloma are over the age of 50.

1. Introduction

Multiple myeloma is a rare form of blood cancer that affects plasma cells. Normally, healthy plasma cells help the body fight infections and create antibodies. Myeloma causes these plasma cells to build up in bone marrow, crowding healthy blood cells. As a result, the antibodies created don't protect the body as intended and can lead to other complications.

2. Symptoms & Complications

Some with multiple myeloma don't have any symptoms, and if they do exist, they vary from patient to patient. For those with symptoms, they may experience:

- + Anemia
- + Impaired immune function
- + Thrombocytopenia (low platelet count)
- + Hypercalcemia

Besides these symptoms, those with this cancer may experience other complications, including problems with their bones, kidneys and an increased risk of infections.

3. Risk Factors

There are several factors that increase the risk of developing multiple myeloma. Those most at risk are:

- + Adults over the age of 50
- + Men
- + African heritage
- + Family history of myeloma
- + Having monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)
- + Those with Gaucher's disease
- + Obesity
- + Exposure to radiation
- + Working in petroleum-related industries

4. Treatment

Determining the best treatment depends on the patient and the progression of the disease. Like other cancers, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, stem cell transplants and other therapies may be used. However, myeloma is not curable. Treatment instead focuses on reducing symptoms, slowing the progression, and improving quality of life for patients.

Did you know?

Myeloma is a rare cancer with the risk of developing the cancer being less than 1% over a lifetime.

For more information on multiple myeloma and supportive resources, please visit [hematology.org/myeloma](https://www.hematology.org/myeloma).

References:

<https://www.hematology.org/education/patients/blood-cancers/myeloma>

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/multiple-myeloma/about/key-statistics.html>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/multiple-myeloma/symptoms-causes/syc-20353378>

<https://themmrf.org/multiple-myeloma/>

<https://www.lls.org/myeloma/treatment>