



## DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

# Managing Multiple Myeloma

Multiple myeloma is a type of blood cancer. If you are diagnosed with this condition, you'll need to work closely with your healthcare team to monitor your symptoms and diagnostic blood tests, and you might need to have treatment for your cancer. The first step towards taking control of multiple myeloma is to ask the right questions during conversations with your doctor. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

## Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Plasma Cells</b>          | A type of white blood cell that helps the body's immune function. Multiple myeloma is characterized by overproduction of defective plasma cells that may not function as they should and can cause illness.   |
| <b>Bone Marrow</b>           | A soft area inside large bones in the body. Normally, plasma cells and other blood cells are produced in the bone marrow, and the excess proliferation of plasma cells in multiple myeloma takes place here too.  |
| <b>Antibodies</b>            | Plasma cells work by producing antibodies—proteins that help bind to and destroy infectious organisms. In multiple myeloma, some of the antibodies produced are not healthy or efficient for fighting infections.   |
| <b>Amyloidosis</b>           | Harmful buildup of protein in the body's tissues. A complication of multiple myeloma.   |
| <b>Renal Failure</b>         | Kidney (renal) damage can occur as a complication of multiple myeloma as the plasma cells break down and some of their components accumulate in the kidneys.  |
| <b>Cancer Staging</b>        | Cancer staging is a way to describe its aggressiveness. Multiple myeloma is categorized as stage I through stage III, going from least to most advanced.  |
| <b>Immunotherapy</b>         | A type of therapy in which the body's immune cells are modified so they can be used to fight disease. This treatment option can be helpful in multiple myeloma.   |
| <b>Proteasome Inhibitors</b> | A special kind of medication that can be used to treat multiple myeloma. These medications inhibit the normal protein recycling process in cancer cells so that the cells will be less able to survive.   |
| <b>Stem Cell Transplant</b>  | Some types of blood cancers are treated with a stem cell transplant. The procedure involves injecting healthy stem cells into the blood so they can replicate and replace cancer cells. Stem cells are immature cells that can develop into another type of cell, such as a plasma cell. Typically, chemotherapy (medication that destroys cancer cells) or immunosuppression (using medication to inhibit immune system function) is needed to help the effects of a stem cell transplant. |



## Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage multiple myeloma.

### About Symptoms

- Will my cancer make me feel sick?
- Should I take medication for pain or should I get urgent medical attention?
- What types of multiple myeloma symptoms are considered dangerous?

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### About Causes & Risk Factors

- Was my cancer caused by exposure to an environmental toxin?
- Is my family at risk of developing multiple myeloma?
- After treatment, can my cancer return?

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### About Treatment

- Will I need to be monitored to get my disease staged again?
- Can my cancer be cured?
- What criteria are used to decide if I need treatment?
- How will I know which treatment option is best for me?
- What are the side effects of treatment?

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### About Coping With Multiple Myeloma

- What is my expected survival?
- Should I avoid people who have a cold or a contagious infection?
- Can I continue to go out in public?
- Can I work?

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