

## What is it?

Myeloma is a type of blood cancer. It affects the plasma cells in the bone marrow. It can cause kidney and nerve problems, or stop bone marrow from making regular blood cells. Myeloma can also affect the bone tissue, causing brittle bones and fractures, and high levels of calcium in the blood.

Myeloma can also cause issues like:

- Fatigue and weakness
- Feeling sick, drowsy or confused
- Abnormal bleeding and bruising
- Bone pain or broken bones
- Increased risk of infections

## What will my GP do now?

Your GP will talk to you about your symptoms. If they think you have myeloma, your GP will arrange blood and urine tests to diagnose you. If your GP thinks you have myeloma, they will refer you to a haematologist for a bone marrow biopsy. You may need to have more tests to work out the stage of your cancer. Treatment depends on the stage of the cancer and where it has spread.

Treatment options can include:

- Pain relief
- Medicines that target the cancer
- Chemotherapy
- Stem cell transplant (to replace bone marrow cells with new, healthy cells)
- Radiation therapy
- Surgery

Your cancer care team will explain the treatments, their benefits and possible side effects. While there is no cure for myeloma, treatment helps to control symptoms. Your GP may refer you to the hospital if you have any symptoms or test results that are of concern.

## What will my GP do in the future?

Once you have been diagnosed, you will see a specialist for check-ups and treatment when needed. Your GP will also support your general health and wellbeing needs.

## What can I do?

Keep a diary of your symptoms. This is so you can let your cancer care team know if there are any changes.

Symptoms include:

- Swollen glands or lumps in your neck, armpits, groin, or elsewhere
- Swelling in your legs or elsewhere
- Pain or bloating in your tummy or feeling fuller sooner than normal when eating
- Losing weight without trying
- A cough, shortness of breath or chest pain
- Headaches, trouble breathing, or problems with your eyesight
- Back pain
- Weakness or numbness in an arm or leg
- Frequent fevers, or any sweats at night or while sleeping

Adopt a healthy diet and keep active. Make time to relax, focus on your breathing and stretching. Stop smoking and decrease the amount of alcohol you drink. Look after your mental wellbeing.



## What questions could I ask my doctor?

- What are the risks of each treatment?*
- How will I know if treatment is working?*
- What pain relief can I use?*
- Can I do my normal activities?*
- How often will I need check-ups?*
- Will I have to stay in hospital?*



## What supports are available?

### Local

View this factsheet on the Health Resource Directory website ([www.healthresourcedirectory.org.au](http://www.healthresourcedirectory.org.au)) to find the right local supports and services for you.

### State and national Myeloma Australia

If you are a person living with myeloma, a carer, family member or friend and you have a question about myeloma and its treatment you may like to speak with a Myeloma Support Nurse on the telephone. Phone **1800 693 566** 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday.

## Where can I learn more?

- **Myeloma Australia** - Resources for patients and carers: [myeloma.org.au](http://myeloma.org.au)
- **Leukaemia Foundation** - Myeloma: [leukaemia.org.au](http://leukaemia.org.au)