MMRF PATIENT WELLNESS GUIDE

Treating Myeloma in Older Adults

OLDER ADULTS WITH MULTIPLE MYELOMA have many treatment options. Your care team will work with you to determine a treatment plan that fits your needs and priorities.

Treating myeloma in older adults

In the past, older adults with cancer were often offered fewer treatment options based on age or assumptions about what they could tolerate. Today, most care teams recognize that age alone does not determine what treatment you can receive.

All myeloma patients, regardless of age, should be considered for standard of care regimens. If you have issues with side effects or cannot tolerate certain treatments, there may be ways to modify the treatment regimens to make them more manageable, including:

- Lowering doses
- Switching drugs
- Sequencing therapies over time
- Pausing or modifying treatment

No matter your age, there are treatment options to consider

Treatment options include approved therapies and clinical trials specifically designed for older adults.

Older patients have historically been left out of clinical trials, but there are now many opportunities to participate.

Your care team can help you explore treatment options that may be right for you.

Multiple myeloma is most common in older adults

- **The median age at the time of a multiple myeloma diagnosis is 69**
- **More than 30% of patients are older than 75**

Treatment goals for older patients

The main goal of standard of care myeloma treatments—at any age—is to control the disease for as long as possible.

As an older adult, you may have treatment preferences or considerations that are important to you, including:

- Choosing between oral and infused treatment
- Reducing side effects
- Minimizing time spent in the hospital or clinic
- Staying independent
- Supporting overall quality of life

It may be helpful to reflect on your goals and share them with your care team so they can tailor a treatment plan to your needs and priorities.

Considerations when choosing a treatment plan

Determining a myeloma treatment plan takes many factors into account, including:

Your overall health	Your disease	The treatment itself	Your day-to-day life
▪ Age ▪ Frailty (a medical condition assessed by your care team) ▪ Other health conditions	▪ Staging (how advanced your disease is) ▪ High-risk features	▪ How well it works ▪ Possible side effects ▪ How it fits into your goals and lifestyle	▪ Daily routines ▪ Transportation ▪ Caregiver support

Supportive care for older adults with myeloma

Supportive care focuses on your overall health, not just myeloma. This kind of care can help you feel stronger, manage side effects, and better tolerate treatment.

Supportive care may include:

- **Physical or occupational therapy** to improve strength, balance, and daily activities
- **Nutrition counseling** to maintain weight, energy, and overall health
- **Care for other health conditions**, such as diabetes or kidney disease
- **Cognitive support** if you notice changes in memory or thinking
- **Vaccinations** to prevent serious infections
- **Social work support** for help with advance care planning, such as a creating a living will or naming a healthcare a living will or healthcare proxy

Talk with your care team to learn more about supportive care options that may be right for you.

Questions to ask your doctor about treatment

Asking questions can help you better understand your treatment options and feel more confident making decisions about treatment. You may want to ask:

- "What treatment options are available that are safe for me?"
- "How might my overall health affect my ability to tolerate treatment or side effects?
- "Are there options for supportive care that will help me handle treatment better?"
- "How will treatment affect my daily life?"
- "Who on my care team can help manage my other health conditions?"

Have more questions about myeloma treatment for older adults?

The MMRF Patient Navigation Center is available to answer your questions and provide additional support. Give us a call at 1-888-841-6673, Monday-Friday, 9AM-7PM ET, or visit us online at themmrf.org/support/patient-navigation-center/