MULTIPLE MYELOMA Research Foundation

Who Is at Risk of Developing Multiple Myeloma?



ANYONE CAN DEVELOP MULTIPLE MYELOMA, but some people have a higher chance than others. Understanding your risk can help you and your healthcare team decide whether monitoring or additional testing is needed.

What is multiple myeloma?

Multiple myeloma is a blood cancer that develops in the bone marrow—the spongy tissue in the center of your bones.

Multiple myeloma risk factors

Having one or more of the following risk factors means your chance may be higher than someone without these factors; it does not mean you will develop multiple myeloma.

Medical and family history

Some medical conditions and family history can increase the risk of developing multiple myeloma, including:

- MGUS (monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance), a condition that can sometimes develop into multiple myeloma
- A family history of blood cancer

Personal factors

The risk of developing multiple myeloma is higher in people who:

- Are older (risk increases with age)
- Are male (assigned male at birth)
- Are overweight

Race and ethnicity

Black/African American people are about twice as likely to develop multiple myeloma than White people

Signs and symptoms of multiple myeloma

Possible signs and symptoms of multiple myeloma include:

- Tiredness that does not improve with rest
- Pain in your back, ribs, or hips
- Frequent infections
- Unexplained weight loss
- Changes in kidney health or abnormal lab results

It is important to remember that signs and symptoms of multiple myeloma can also be caused by other health conditions. Still, tell your healthcare team if you have new or worsening symptoms or changes in your health.

Environmental exposures

Long-term exposure to certain chemicals or industrial environments may increase a person's risk of developing multiple myeloma

Most people with risk factors will never develop multiple myeloma.

What you can do next

If you have concerns about developing multiple myeloma, your healthcare team can help you understand your risk and decide what follow-up care is right for you.

- **Stay up to date with your care:** Keep regular appointments and complete any blood tests or other monitoring recommended by your healthcare team
- **Pay attention to changes in your health:** Tell your healthcare team about new symptoms, symptoms that are getting worse, or changes that concern you
- **Talk to your healthcare team about risk:** If you have one or more risk factors for multiple myeloma, talk with your healthcare team about whether additional monitoring is right for you

  These questions can help you talk with your healthcare team:

  - **What is my risk of developing multiple myeloma?**
  - **How often should I have follow-up visits and blood tests for my MGUS?**
  - **Should I see a multiple myeloma specialist?**
  - **Are there signs or symptoms of multiple myeloma I should watch for?**

MMRF resources

Help is available as you learn about your risk.

Access recorded webinars, podcasts, toolkits, and other MMRF resources:

Learn more about multiple myeloma, MGUS, and early detection:

Add your own questions below to bring to your next appointment:

Have questions?

The MMRF Patient Navigation Center is here to provide guidance and support.

Call us at 888-841-6673 Monday-Friday, 9AM-7PM ET

Visit online at themmrf.org/support/patient-navigation-center