

What Is Multiple Myeloma?

Multiple Myeloma Is A Cancer of the Bone Marrow Plasma Cells

Our bone marrow creates plasma cells that make antibodies, which play an important role in fighting off viruses and bacteria. Multiple myeloma causes the bone marrow to create dysfunctional antibodies and plasma cells. A malignant plasma cell or cancer cell is referred to as a myeloma cell.

Myeloma is a cancer of the plasma cells in the bone marrow. The malignant plasma cells, or myeloma cells, accumulate in the bone marrow. These myeloma cells are abnormal plasma cells that divide uncontrollably, leading to the overproduction of dysfunctional antibodies and crowding out healthy blood cells.

A VIDEO IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

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What Is Multiple Myeloma?



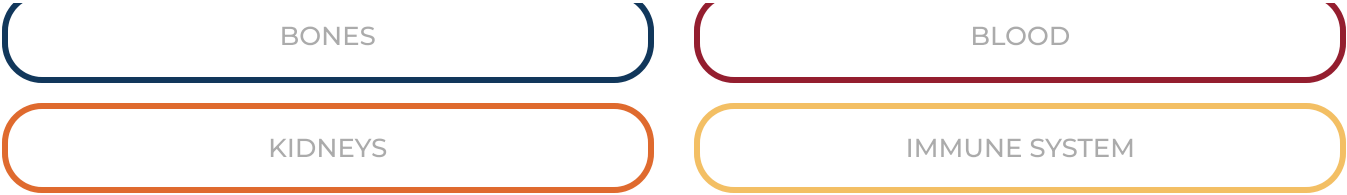
IMF Medical Advisor Dr. Joseph Mikhael describes what myeloma is, how plasma cells and antibodies work, and why doctors use the CRAB criteria to define active disease.

[WATCH THE VIDEO \(/VIDEOS/MULTIPLE-MYELOMA-EXPLAINED-CLEARLY-THOSE-WHO-ARE-NEWLY-DIAGNOSED\)](#)

HOW MULTIPLE MYELOMA IMPACTS THE BODY

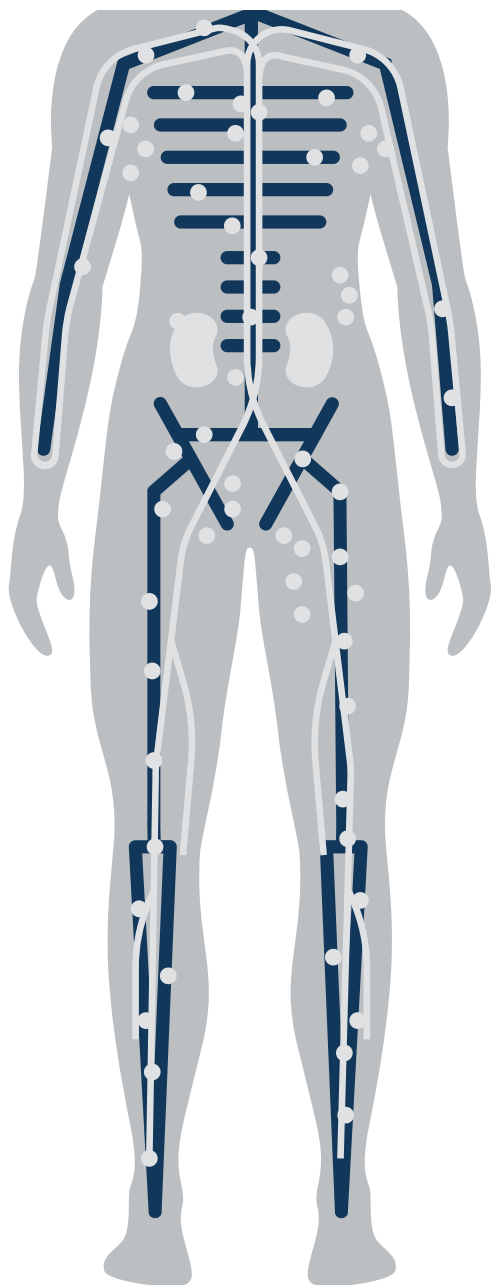
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The by-product of bone breakdown is calcium released into the blood. This is called hypercalcemia.

The Course of the Disease

When the disease is discovered, there is much to learn and be aware of:

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diagnosed as early as possible. Early diagnosis may reduce the number of potential complications with more advanced myeloma, which can be slow-moving or more aggressive. A skilled myeloma specialist is ideal for determining the best approach for your individual situation.

MORE INFO FOR NEWLY
DIAGNOSED (/MULTIPLE-
MYELOMA/MULTIPLE-MYELOMA-DIAGNOSIS)

Who Gets Multiple Myeloma

Anyone can get cancer of the plasma cells. However, studies show that multiple myeloma can be more prevalent in persons of African descent. Age can also be a factor — 65-74 is the average age range for diagnosis, though persons of African American and Hispanic descent are usually diagnosed at an earlier age. Multiple myeloma is also more prevalent in men than in women.

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176,404

new cases are
reported yearly,
worldwide.*

Is 2X's

more likely to occur
in people of African
descent.

2nd

most common blood
cancer in the world.



*The reported cases of multiple myeloma worldwide may not fully represent all myeloma cases worldwide. Globally, myeloma may not be diagnosed or reported as often as it occurs. **Source:** Liu, X., Zhuang, H., Li, F. et al. Trends and projections of the global and regional burden of multiple myeloma in adults aged 40 and over, 1990–2044. Sci Rep 15, 13595 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-96981-w> (<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-96981-w>)

Characteristics of Multiple Myeloma Plasma Cells

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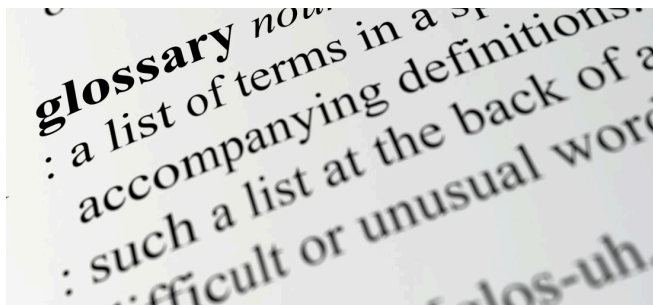
composed of plasma cells. It can grow inside bone, or intramedullary. It can also grow outside bone, or extramedullary or in the soft-tissue. Multiple myeloma occurs when there are multiple plasmacytomas inside or outside bone. When patients with myeloma have disease outside the bone marrow, this is called "extramedullary disease" (EMD).

READ MORE: CAUSES & SYMPTOMS (/NEWLY-DIAGNOSED/DO-YOU-HAVE-MYELOMA)



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Learn all of the terms that are frequently used when living with and being treated for multiple myeloma.

SEE GLOSSARY
([HTTPS://ISSUU.COM/INTERNATIONAL-MYELOMA-FOUNDATION/DOCS/MYELOMA-GLOSSARY-EN?FR=SYTLLZJQ3MZIYNDM](https://issuu.com/international-myeloma-foundation/docs/myeloma-glossary-en?FR=SYTLLZJQ3MZIYNDM))



IN 2023,

an estimated
202,793
people were living with myeloma in the U.S.

An estimated
36,000
new myeloma cases may be diagnosed in the U.S. in 2026.

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Men are
1.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY
to develop myeloma than women.

MM is most frequently diagnosed in
65-74
year olds.



SURVIVORSHIP

Death rates have been falling
0.8% YEARLY
on average from 2004-2013.

Five-year survival rates have
INCREASED TO 63.7%
from 2016-2022.

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...you can online community to stay connected with other patients and caregivers.

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How the IMF Leads the Fight Against Myeloma

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Our bone marrow creates plasma cells that make antibodies, which play an important role in fighting off viruses and bacteria. Multiple myeloma causes the bone marrow to cre



IMWG

**INTERNATIONAL MYELOMA
WORKING GROUP**

A Research Division of International Myeloma Foundation

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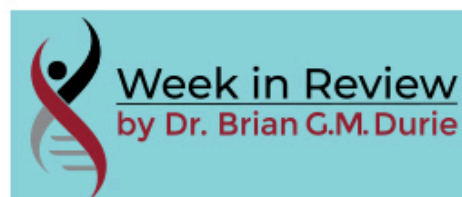


🔗 **Resources and Support for the Myeloma Community** (/patient-caregiver-information)

Multiple myeloma is a disease that can often be treated successfully. Many patients live long and productive lives after being diagnosed. At the International Myeloma I

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Black Swan Research Initiative ([/black-swan-research-initiative](#))



iStopMM ([/black-swan-research-initiative/istopmm](#))

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First Results from the iStopMM Study (/black-swan-research-initiative/black-swan-research-projects)



Dr. Sigurdur Kristinsson gives the first results of the Iceland wide iStopMM study.



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