

MYELOMA 10 TOP TIPS

1 There are around 5,700 cases of myeloma diagnosed every year in the UK. Early diagnosis, via GP referral, is associated with improved one-year survival compared to emergency admissions (88% vs 62%).

2 Myeloma is twice as common among individuals of African heritage.

3 Although myeloma is typically seen in older people, 26% of patients are under 65 years.

4 'Red flags' include unexplained persistent pain, particularly back or bone (>4-6 weeks), pathological fractures, weakness and fatigue, recurrent or persistent infections, unexplained anaemia or nosebleeds and bruising.

5 CRAB denotes 4 features of myeloma included in the definition criteria developed by the International Myeloma Working Group: **C**alcium raised, **R**enal impairment/failure, **A**naemia, **B**one disease.

6 Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS) is recognised as the pre-malignant stage to myeloma. It is characterised by the presence of serum paraprotein <30g/L, plasma cells <10% bone marrow but absence of CRAB features. 1% will progress to myeloma each year and others may have associated pathologies, e.g. osteoporosis, increased infection risk and renal disease (check for proteinuria) so monitoring is advised.

7 **Myeloma UK Myeloma Diagnosis Pathway:** FBC and blood chemistry to check for anaemia, elevated ESR and renal impairment. If abnormal then request protein electrophoresis and urinary Bence Jones protein test urgently (plus serum free light chain assay if available). Haemoglobin may start to fall and ESR rise two years prior to diagnosis.

8 If paraprotein is >15g/L and/or the serum free light chain ratio is outside of the range (0.1 – 7) then refer urgently to a haematologist. Lesser abnormalities are usually due to MGUS.

9 Myeloma patients can experience long delays to diagnosis due to the non-specific nature of symptoms, which can lead to referrals to inappropriate departments. Consider performing blood tests for myeloma on all patients with unexplained anaemia prior to hospital referral.

10 Myeloma kidney disease is a common complication that can result in renal failure. AKI is a leading cause of emergency admission for myeloma patients. Venous thromboembolic events (VTEs) are more common and any VTE symptoms in myeloma patients should be acted upon quickly.

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The Myeloma UK Infoline is open 9am-5pm, 5 days a week for anyone wanting information and support about myeloma. Call us for free on: **0800 980 3332** (UK) or **1800 937 773** (Ireland) or visit myeloma.org.uk for further details on how to speak to a Myeloma Information Specialist.



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