



# Early Warning Signs of Myeloma

- Multiple myeloma is a cancer of the bone marrow plasma cells, white blood cells that make antibodies.
- Men are more likely than women to develop myeloma. The disease is most frequently diagnosed in individuals who are 65 to 74 years old, and it is twice as common in people of African descent.
- More than 30,000 new cases of myeloma are diagnosed in the US each year.
- Myeloma is treatable and outcomes continue to improve.

## Primary care physicians are the first to diagnose half of all myeloma patients

- When diagnosed by primary care physicians, more than 50% of myeloma patients experience a delay in diagnosis of more than 6 months.
- Delayed diagnosis is associated with a greater incidence of secondary complications.
- Earlier diagnosis can result in earlier treatment and fewer secondary complications.
- Myeloma is now being diagnosed in people younger than 50 years of age. It is not only a disease of the elderly.

## Do you have one or more UNEXPLAINED symptoms?

- ▶ **B**ack pain (persistent or recurrent)
  - ▶ **B**one pain (persistent or recurrent)
  - ▶ **F**atigue (unexplained progressive tiredness)
- } **BBF**  
(early symptoms)
- 
- ▶ **C**alcium elevations
  - ▶ **R**enal impairment (elevated creatinine)
  - ▶ **A**nemia
  - ▶ **B**one lesions
- } **CRAB**  
(diagnostic criteria)

**Any ONE** of the **BBF** early warning signs could indicate myeloma.

**Any ONE** of the **CRAB** diagnostic criteria could indicate myeloma.

## The best and most cost-effective screening tests

For patients with any one of the **BBF** or **CRAB** criteria, follow the recommendations of the International Myeloma Working Group (IMWG) and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), and get a combination of **3 screening tests**:

- **Freelite**<sup>®</sup> test (serum free light chain assay; “free kappa, free lambda with ratio, serum”),
- **SPEP** (serum protein electrophoresis), and
- **IFE** (immunofixation electrophoresis).

Use of all three tests together will identify 99% of cases of myeloma. SPEP alone will miss 1 out of 8 patients. Accurate and efficient testing can save patients from secondary complications.

## Early diagnosis is key to achieving best outcomes for patients

Visit [myeloma.org](http://myeloma.org) for more information and to learn about the ways the IMF is helping to improve the quality of life of myeloma patients while working toward prevention and a cure.

*As always, the IMF urges you to discuss all medical issues with your doctor, and to contact the IMF with your myeloma questions and concerns.*



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### International Myeloma Foundation

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