



Understanding Peripheral Neuropathy

Multiple myeloma is a cancer of the blood. But it may affect many parts of your body. This information will help you understand peripheral neuropathy and why it may occur in patients with multiple myeloma.

KEY POINTS

1. Peripheral neuropathy may be caused by multiple myeloma or its treatments
2. Peripheral neuropathy can affect many different types of nerves
3. There are things you can do that may help you cope with the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy

MULTIPLE MYELOMA: A REVIEW

Multiple myeloma is a cancer of the blood. But it may affect many parts of your body. This information will help you understand peripheral neuropathy and why it may occur in patients with multiple myeloma. Let's first review multiple myeloma.

Multiple myeloma is a cancer that starts in the bone marrow, which is the soft, spongy center of certain bones. Red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets are formed inside the bone marrow.

Multiple myeloma affects a type of white blood cell, called plasma cells. Normally, plasma cells make antibodies, which help fight infection. But in multiple myeloma the plasma cells become abnormal and grow out of control.

Multiple myeloma produces large amounts of an antibody called a monoclonal (M) protein, which:

- Does not allow enough healthy red blood cells, healthy white blood cells, and healthy platelets to develop in the bone marrow
- Causes bone to break down faster than it should, allowing soft spots in the bone to form

MULTIPLE MYELOMA AND PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

Peripheral neuropathy may be caused by multiple myeloma or its treatments. Abnormal plasma cells produce a large amount of M protein, which can result in damage to your nerves causing peripheral neuropathy.

UNDERSTANDING PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

- Your nervous system sends signals between your brain and every part of your body
- Once a nerve is damaged, it may send too many or too few signals to the brain
- Because the longest nerves are the first affected, symptoms usually start in the toes, then move to the ankle and leg. In the upper body, symptoms usually start in the fingers and move up to the hands and arms



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SYMPTOMS OF PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

Peripheral neuropathy can affect many different types of nerves. Depending on the nerves affected, you may experience:

- Pain
- Burning
- Tingling (“pins and needles” feeling)
- Loss of feeling (can be numbness or just less ability to sense pressure, touch, heat, or cold)
- Trouble using your fingers to pick up or hold things
- Balance problems
- Trouble with tripping or stumbling while walking
- Sensitivity to touch or temperature
- Shrinking muscles
- Muscle weakness
- Trouble swallowing
- Constipation
- Trouble passing urine

Put a check mark next to the symptoms you have and discuss them with your doctor or nurse. Ask your healthcare team how you can monitor your peripheral neuropathy when you are at home.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

There are also things that may help you cope with the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy. You may want to talk with your doctor about:

- Avoiding things that make your peripheral neuropathy worse, such as hot or cold temperatures, or snug clothes or shoes
- Avoiding alcoholic drinks
- Controlling your blood sugar if you have diabetes
- Protecting your hands by wearing gloves when you clean or work outdoors
- Using handrails, a walker, or a cane for support so you don’t lose your balance
- Taking care of your feet. Look at them once a day, especially the bottoms, to see if you have any injuries or sores
- Being careful when using knives, scissors, box cutters, or other sharp objects
- Whether physical therapy or occupational therapy is right for you

You are part of your healthcare team. Work together with your healthcare team to best manage your symptoms.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more in-depth information about peripheral neuropathy, consider these resources:

The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy Website – www.foundationforpn.org

The Neuropathy Association – www.neuropathy.org

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center Website – www.mskcc.org

(look for the “Neuropathy Care for Cancer Survivors” video series)

Neurology Now[®] – <http://journals.lww.com/neurologynow/pages/default.aspx>

(a publication of the American Academy of Neurology for patients and caregivers)

Information about these independent organizations is provided as an additional resource for obtaining information related to multiple myeloma. It does not indicate endorsement by Celgene Corporation of an organization or its communications.

Your healthcare team is your best source of information about Peripheral Neuropathy.

Visit MyelomaCentral.com

