



This article will show you how to recognize anxiety and depression and monitor these conditions.

## WHY IT'S HELPFUL

With so much emphasis placed on physical health during treatment for MM, it can be easy to ignore your emotional well-being. By staying focused on mind as well as body, you can become a more effective participant in your complete health.

## KEY POINTS

1. Multiple myeloma (MM) may affect you both physically and emotionally
2. It's normal to feel sad, worried, or lonely, but ongoing anxiety and depression can be serious problems
3. Share your feelings with your healthcare team on a regular basis to identify any potential problems
4. You are not alone—and there are things you can do to deal with the emotional impact of cancer

## UNDERSTANDING MULTIPLE MYELOMA'S IMPACT ON YOUR EMOTIONS

Multiple myeloma may affect you both physically and emotionally. It's normal to feel sad, worried, or scared of the unknown. It's also normal to feel lonely or distant as you face issues that those around you may not fully understand. But remember, you are not alone. Whether it's family, friends, your healthcare team, or a cancer support group, there are people who can offer support and help you deal with the emotional impact of cancer.

## RECOGNIZING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Although it's normal to feel sad, scared, or lonely, be sure to keep track of your feelings. Ongoing **anxiety** (feelings of being very frightened, upset, or worried) or **depression** (feelings of deep sadness) can be a serious problem that may make it hard to concentrate, sleep, or do everyday activities like shopping for groceries or going to work.

Talk to your healthcare team about how you're feeling on a regular basis. And tell your doctor if—and how often—you experience any of the following:

- Feelings of panic or being easily upset
- Feelings of being downhearted and blue
- Shaking or trembling of your arms and/or legs
- Headaches, back, or neck pain
- Stomachaches or indigestion
- Nightmares
- Crying spells or times when you feel like crying
- Trouble sleeping at night
- Increased irritability
- Fatigue (extreme tiredness) for no apparent reason



# Coping with Anxiety and Depression

Remember, only your doctor can diagnose anxiety or depression. Always talk to a healthcare professional about any concerns you may have.

## TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR EMOTIONS

**FEAR:** You may be afraid because you don't know what lies ahead. Learning about your cancer and its treatment may help your fear. Ask your doctor about multiple myeloma and its treatments.

**SADNESS AND WORRY:** These feelings usually go away with time. If they don't and they begin to interfere with your daily life, tell your doctor. Your doctor can refer you to the appropriate therapist or prescribe medicine that may help.

**LONELINESS:** Feeling alone or distant is common. Be sure to talk to your doctor or nurse about how you're feeling. They may encourage you to talk to a close friend, a counselor or social worker, or a member of your faith or spiritual community. A cancer support group can also help you share your story and feel less lonely. Ask your doctor about cancer support groups.

**HOPE:** A positive and hopeful outlook may help you come to grips with cancer. Try building a sense of hope by writing down positive feelings and sharing them with family and friends. Whenever possible, continue to do the things you have always enjoyed—don't stop just because you have cancer.

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