

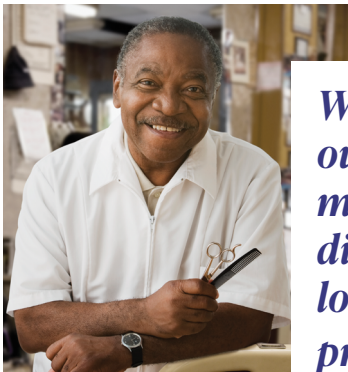
My Promise to Learn About Multiple Myeloma



Multiple Myeloma, What Is It?

Multiple myeloma (MM) is a rare type of blood cancer that disproportionately impacts Black people. Because it's uncommon and because of challenges within the healthcare system, MM is often overlooked — especially in Black people. As a result, the disease can go undetected until it has already progressed and spread through the body.

The good news? We respond well to treatment when it is caught early.



We owe it to ourselves to learn more about the disease, what to look for, and how to protect our health.

How Does Multiple Myeloma Form?

MM affects plasma cells, a type of white blood cell found mostly in bone marrow (the soft part inside of bones where blood cells are made). Plasma cells make proteins, called antibodies, that our immune system uses to fight viruses, bacteria, and other sicknesses.

However, when plasma cells have DNA damage, they can grow out of control and weaken your immune system. Damaged plasma cells — also called multiple myeloma cells — can rapidly spread inside the bone marrow and replace normal cells.

How Does Multiple Myeloma Affect the Body?

Myeloma cells rapidly increase in numbers and limit the ability of our normal cells. As a result, the immune system is weakened and vulnerable to infection.

Myeloma cells also limit the number of white blood cells, platelets, and red blood cells our body produces — which can result in a lack of oxygen in the blood that leaves you feeling weak, tired, or even short of breath.

So What Can We Do About Multiple Myeloma?



Nobody looks out for our health better than we do. Since our chances of developing MM are higher than other groups, let's take steps to do something about it.

STEP 1

KNOW OUR RISKS

While we can't completely avoid the odds of getting multiple myeloma (MM), knowing our risk factors is the first step to protecting ourselves, our family, and those we care about.

- Black people are 2x more likely to be diagnosed with MM than other groups
- 20% of all MM cases occur in Black people, and the number of cases is rising
- On average, Black people show signs of MM 5–10 years earlier than White people
- You have a 2–4x higher risk of developing MM if an immediate family member had it

STEP 2

KNOW WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Multiple myeloma doesn't often show signs or symptoms until its later stages, which makes it hard to detect. That's why we need to get routine checkups with our doctor. They can run tests during our visit and discuss any symptoms we might be feeling, like:

- Bone breaks or pain
- Constant tiredness and fatigue
- Brain fog or confusion
- Weakness or numbness in your legs

While these signs and symptoms may not always mean you have MM, it's important to talk to your doctor about them if you're at risk for MM. For a full list of signs and symptoms, download Facts About Multiple Myeloma & What You Can Do Now.



STEP 3

PROMISE TO BE ON TOP OF OUR HEALTH

Here are a few things you can easily do to get started. Check off the items as you complete them.

- Talk to our family members to know whether MM runs in our family
- Look out for one another by spreading awareness of MM
- Schedule annual blood work and talk with our doctor to help catch diseases like MM earlier
- Eat healthier foods
- Incorporate exercise into our lifestyle



By being proactive, we can take care of ourselves and each other.

By making a promise to learn about MM, we protect ourselves and the people we love.

Join the
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Community

Connect with us and others on social media to make your Multiple Myeloma Promise and learn more.

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