

Understanding Multiple Myeloma

If you have been diagnosed with multiple myeloma or know someone who has, you may have lots of questions. Learning some basic information is a good place to start.

What is multiple myeloma? Multiple myeloma is a rare cancer that affects your blood and bones. Multiple myeloma is a type of cancer that develops in the soft, spongy tissue at the center of your bones, called bone marrow.

What does bone marrow do? Bone marrow is where white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets are made. Healthy white blood cells help your body fight infection and disease. Multiple myeloma affects a certain kind of white blood cell called a plasma cell.



White blood cells



Red blood cells

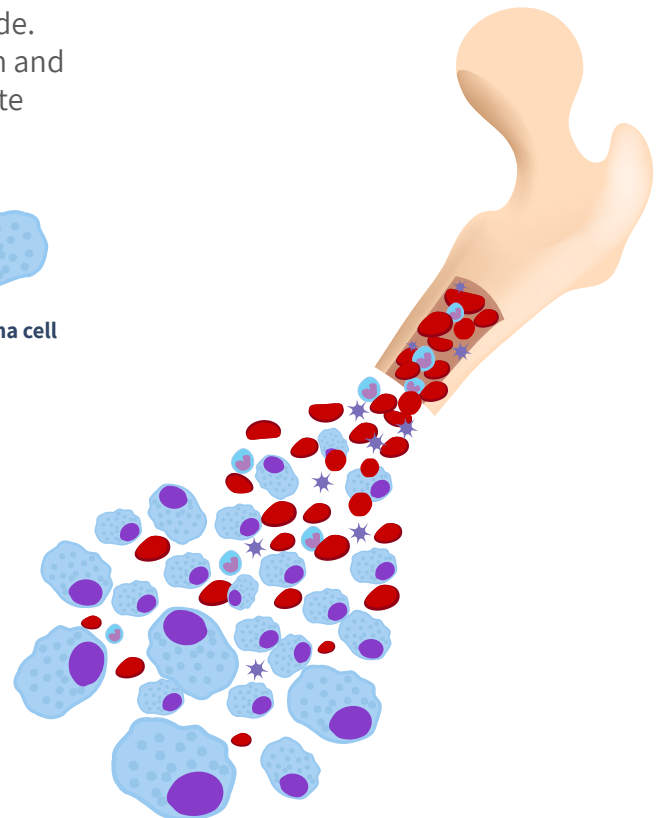


Platelets



Myeloma cell

What happens to plasma cells? In people with multiple myeloma, plasma cells grow at an uncontrolled rate. These cells are called myeloma cells. They grow and spread in the bone, leaving no room for healthy blood cells to grow. They also produce abnormal antibodies that don't work properly. This condition is called multiple myeloma.



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