LIVING WITH
RELAPSED REFRACTORY
MULTIPLE MYELOMA

The information provided in this guide is not meant to replace the advice of your doctor.

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INTRODUCTION

Living with multiple myeloma can mean facing new challenges. Due to the recurring nature of multiple myeloma, these challenges may change as your disease changes.

While multiple myeloma may not have a cure, there are treatments that can help manage the disease over time. Certain treatments are used at diagnosis, while other treatments are used when your disease returns. These treatments are meant to keep your multiple myeloma under control.

Your multiple myeloma may not respond, or may stop responding, to certain treatments. This is called **refractory multiple myeloma**. When your disease returns after initially responding to a treatment, this is called **relapsed multiple myeloma**.

This guide offers suggestions for keeping physically and emotionally healthy while living with relapsed refractory multiple myeloma.

KEEPING **HEALTHY**

While living with multiple myeloma, it's important to maintain your physical and emotional health.

While your doctor and other healthcare team members play a crucial role in your care, there are many things you can do to support your overall health.

Talk to your healthcare team about the nutrition your body needs before, during, and after treatment. Your body's needs may change over time, so be sure to check in with your team regularly.

STAYING ACTIVE

Regular physical activity can

- Help reduce fatigue
- Strengthen your immune system
- Lower your risk of falls
- Support your emotional health

See pages 6 to 9 for more on how staying active can benefit your overall health during treatment.

A HEALTHY DIET

Eating a healthy diet can

- Support your immune system
- Increase your energy levels
- Help you manage certain symptoms of multiple myeloma

See pages 10 to 15 for guidance on a well-balanced diet that can help address some of the symptoms of multiple myeloma.

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Living with multiple myeloma can be a stressful and sometimes overwhelming experience. Finding the right support and creating daily routines can help keep you focused on what matters most to you.

See pages 16 to 20 for support resources and activities you can do to benefit your emotional health.

STAYING **ACTIVE**

In the past, people living with cancer and undergoing treatment were advised to rest. Today, it is widely recognized that regular physical activity can reduce the impact of cancer-related symptoms and improve physical and emotional health.

This may be especially important for people living with multiple myeloma, who have to learn to manage their disease over time.

Always consult your doctor before you start a new exercise routine. Your doctor can work with you to find activities that you enjoy and are right for your abilities. If your ability to do physical activity is limited, talk with your doctor about physical therapy.

HOW STAYING ACTIVE CAN BENEFIT YOUR PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Regular exercise can support your physical health by reducing fatigue, improving sleep, increasing mobility and strength, and strengthening your immune system. It can also support your mental and emotional health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression.

- Try aerobic exercises like taking a daily walk or riding a stationary bicycle, or other physical activities like dancing or gardening, which can improve cardiovascular function and boost emotional health
- Use light weights or resistance bands to strengthen muscles and bones, which in turn helps to improve balance and coordination
- Practice techniques like yoga or tai chi that can improve flexibility and provide calming benefits

REDUCE FATIGUE AND STRENGTHEN YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Cancer-related fatigue is different and more persistent than feeling tired. This type of fatigue is common among people with multiple myeloma and can be caused by a combination of factors, including treatment side effects, multiple myeloma itself, and other medical conditions.

Regular exercise and physical activity can help address fatigue by increasing your energy level.

Exercise also helps your body rest and recover, which in turn may improve the quality of your sleep.

Quality sleep is important to maintaining the health of your immune system. Regular exercise also strengthens your immune system, which can help to protect you from infections.

REDUCE ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

It is common for people living with multiple myeloma to experience difficult thoughts and emotions. Aerobic exercise and practices like yoga and tai chi offer ways to improve your overall mood and reduce the impact of stress, anxiety, and depression.

Consider incorporating physical activities you enjoy into your daily routine to benefit your physical and emotional health.

STRENGTHEN YOUR MUSCLES AND BONES

It's common for multiple myeloma to cause bone damage. In addition to your multiple myeloma treatment, your doctor may prescribe other medicines to help prevent bone loss. These medicines may help reduce pain and the risk of fracture.

While exercise can't address existing bone damage from multiple myeloma, it can help you strengthen and maintain the health of your bones.

Just like muscle, bone responds to exercise by becoming stronger. Weight-bearing exercises, in which your bones support your own body weight, are a low-impact way to strengthen your bones.

Exercises that strengthen your muscles can improve balance and coordination, which can lower your risk of falling. Even light free weights or resistance bands are great ways to improve and maintain muscle strength.

Ask a friend or family member to partner with you on an exercise plan. Making choices that benefit your overall health can be easier when it's a team effort.

A HEALTHY **DIET**

A well-balanced diet can improve your overall health and help you to feel your best. The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) offers guidance on healthy eating it calls "The New American Plate."

Create a nutrition plan that works for you. Ask your doctor to help you create a diet that best fits your needs and preferences.

A HEALTHY, WELL-BALANCED DIET

While historically an American meal has been dominated by large portions of meat with smaller portions of vegetables, the AICR suggests this revised approach:

- Make a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans the center of most meals
- Favor an unprocessed, plant-based diet over meat and other animal-based foods
  - When eating meat, choose unprocessed lean cuts, keep your portions small, and increase your portions of whole grains and vegetables
- Replace starches with whole grains like brown rice, barley, bulgur, and quinoa
- Try combining smaller portions of meat with larger portions of fresh vegetables and whole grains into one-pot meals like stir-fries that you can serve in a bowl

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NUTRITION TO ADDRESS THE SYMPTOMS OF MULTIPLE MYELOMA

While not everyone gets the same symptoms of multiple myeloma, or gets them to the same degree, it's helpful to be aware of the possible symptoms and how nutrition can help.

FATIGUE

Multiple myeloma can impact the normal production of healthy red blood cells. When the amount of red blood cells is low, this is called anemia. Low levels of iron in your blood can also contribute to anemia. Low levels of iron and red blood cells can lead to feeling weak or tired.

Here are some ways that diet can help.

- While iron is found in certain meats and seafood, these plants and plant-based foods offer good sources of iron:
  - Kidney beans, black beans, and chickpeas
  - Lentils
  - Spinach
  - Tofu
  - Brown rice
- Eat iron-containing and plant-based foods with other foods that contain vitamin C, such as orange juice. Vitamin C can help your body absorb the iron you get from food
- Consider taking iron supplements

Talk to your doctor about which vitamins or minerals are best for you.

BONE HEALTH

Multiple myeloma usually starts in the bone marrow that is at the center of most bones. This can result in bone damage or weakened bones. Increasing your consumption of calcium, magnesium, and vitamins D and K can contribute to bone health and may help to prevent bone loss. In addition, some studies have shown that it helps to be mindful of drinking coffee, soda, and alcohol in moderation, as these drinks may interfere with calcium absorption.

Try incorporating these foods into your diet:

- Legumes like beans, chickpeas, and lentils are good sources of calcium and magnesium
- Leafy greens and other vegetables are good sources of calcium, magnesium, and vitamin K. These include kale, collard greens, spinach, and broccoli
- Some seafood, like tuna and salmon, are good sources of vitamin D. Canned tuna is also a good source and a more affordable option
- Some foods like milk, orange juice, and yogurt are fortified with vitamin D

Talk to your doctor about caring for your bone health. Your doctor may suggest supplements, certain physical exercises, and lifestyle changes to help prevent bone loss and support the overall health of your bones.

KIDNEY FUNCTION

Kidneys work to filter out waste from the blood, which then leaves the body as urine. Multiple myeloma produces a kind of protein, called M-protein, that can impact this process. Too much M-protein can build up in your blood and cause kidney damage.

When multiple myeloma damages bones, this can also cause calcium to be released into the blood. Too much calcium in the blood, called hypercalcemia, can also harm the kidneys and leads to other symptoms, like dehydration.

Here are some steps you can take to promote kidney health:

- Eat a well-balanced diet
- Limit your intake of sodium
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially water

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Talk to your doctor about what vitamins or minerals are best for you.

IMMUNE SYSTEM HEALTH

Multiple myeloma and some of the medicines used to treat it can lead to low blood cell counts. This can include the kinds of blood cells that help fight infections. This is one of the reasons why people living with multiple myeloma have compromised immune systems, which puts them at greater risk for infections and fevers.

In addition to eating a well-balanced diet, you can follow these basic food safety guidelines to help support the health of your immune system:

- Wash your hands regularly, especially before and after handling food
- Thaw and marinate meat in a refrigerator instead of on a countertop
- Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs

You can also improve your immune health by getting enough sleep and reducing stress.

Work with your healthcare team to come up with a healthy, enjoyable diet that supports your overall health.

EMOTIONAL **WELL-BEING**

Regular physical activity and a healthy diet can improve your mood and help you maintain your energy levels. Staying physically healthy can support your emotional health.

There are also things you can do that focus more specifically on your emotional health, from day to day and moment to moment. The following pages offer resources and activities to support your emotional well-being.

FINDING SUPPORT

One of the most important things to remember is that you are not alone. There are other people living with multiple myeloma whose personal challenges, setbacks, and successes can offer insights and opportunities. And your own experiences can benefit others as well.

Asking your healthcare team is one place to start when looking for a support group. There may be local groups that meet regularly in person. Online forums and networks offer ways to connect virtually with people beyond your local community.

There are also helpful organizations that offer ways to find and access support groups.

FIND A SUPPORT GROUP THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU

International Myeloma Foundation

myeloma.org | 1-800-452-2873

Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation

themmrf.org | 1-203-229-0464

HealthTree Foundation for Multiple Myeloma

healthtree.org/myeloma/community | 1-800-709-1113

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

lls.org | 1-800-955-4572

MINDFULNESS: A SOURCE OF CALM, WHEREVER YOU ARE

Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) is a clinically proven method for improving emotional health. Commonly known as mindfulness, it is the practice of increasing awareness and acceptance of the present moment.

Sometimes we may daydream, thinking aimlessly about the past or the future. But at other times, our thoughts may take the form of regrets about the past or worries about the future. These thoughts can overwhelm us and lead to stress, anxiety, and even depression.

Learning to recognize when this is happening and to respond by practicing mindfulness can be an effective technique for returning to a calmer and more balanced state of mind.

There are a number of ways to practice mindfulness. Today, there are even apps for mobile devices that teach mindfulness and offer guided exercises. One of the easiest and simplest ways to practice mindfulness is with something we may rarely think about — our breathing.

BREATHE IN, BREATHE OUT: A SIMPLE MINDFULNESS EXERCISE

Although we can change our breathing with conscious effort, most of the time breathing is something our body does automatically. We inhale and exhale, usually without noticing it. Focusing our attention on our breathing is an easy way to practice being more present — and it's something we can do almost anywhere, at any time.

Try the following breathing exercise:

- Sit in a position that is comfortable for you and allows you to be alert
- Close your eyes and breathe naturally, in and out through your nose
- Count with your breath from 1 to 10. One as you inhale, 2 as you exhale, etc, until you reach 10. Repeat this process a few times
- Anytime you notice that your mind has wandered, simply return your attention to your breathing and start counting again
- When you're ready, open your eyes and take a moment to notice how you feel

Try doing this breathing exercise with a family member or friend.

ONE LINE A DAY

A SIMPLER APPROACH TO JOURNALING

Keeping a record of your daily experiences in a traditional journal can be a beneficial exercise, but it might not be for everyone. Another option is something you could think of as "microjournaling."

Use a journal, notebook, or even your smartphone or tablet, to write down a brief observation or reflection once a day. It could be something you're grateful for, an intention you'd like to set, or simply something you noticed during the day that you found meaningful.

Whatever it is, think of writing down one line a day as a brief moment to pause and reflect. This kind of regular habit can support the practice of mindfulness discussed on page 18.

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