

- Speaker 1: Welcome to the Cancer Wise Podcast, where we'll discuss cancer prevention, treatments, the latest in research and important news around cancer. Brought to you by the University of Michigan Health Rogel Cancer Center.
- Erica Bass: Hi everyone. My name is Erica Bass and I am a producer on Michigan Medicine's production team. And today I am sitting down with Christie, who is a nurse at Rogel Cancer Center, where we'll be learning more about multiple myeloma.
- Christie Bryne: I'm Christie Bryne. I'm an infusion nurse at the Rogel Cancer Center.
- Erica Bass: Okay. Christie, so for the general public who don't know, what is multiple myeloma?
- Christie Bryne: Multiple myeloma is a blood cancer that forms in the white blood cells, called plasma cells. They accumulate in the bone marrow. The unhealthy cells kind of crowd your bone marrow causing complications, such as fatigue, frequent infections, bone pain. Sometimes it's a case where they don't have to be treated, just observed, and others will need to go right into treatment.
- Erica Bass: Going off of that, what are the signs and symptoms to be aware of for multiple myeloma?
- Christie Bryne: Multiple myeloma can actually go undiagnosed for a while. It can have minor symptoms, but the more common ones are frequent infections. It can thin your bones, so you could have bone pain, you can have fractures. Fatigue is one, even a foggy memory. Some people get nausea.
- Erica Bass: I know you said it can go undiagnosed, but how is it typically diagnosed?
- Christie Bryne: With my experience as an infusion nurse, when I talk to my patients, it seems like it's been an accidental blood draw for a routine blood draw, and they found something called an M-protein, so they looked further into it. Sometimes people symptoms and their doctor will refer them to see a specialist.
- Erica Bass: And so then in that case, what are the treatment options for multiple myeloma?
- Christie Bryne: There is multiple treatment options. Chemotherapy is a standard option. There are now immune therapies. There is corticosteroids after a few months of treatment. Some people get a bone marrow stem cell transplant, then they can move on to maintenance, biotherapies, radiation.
- Erica Bass: Can multiple myeloma or other blood cancers be prevented?
- Christie Bryne: Unfortunately, they don't know what causes multiple myeloma. I mean, there's theories out there, but they cannot be prevented.



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- Erica Bass: Does it happen where multiple myeloma affects one gender, age, or ethnicity more than others?
- Christie Bryne: Multiple myeloma is more commonly in patients 65 years or older, and males it affects more predominantly. Multiple myeloma does affect African Americans more than other ethnicity groups.
- Erica Bass: Okay. So what can a patient expect when they come here for treatment?
- Christie Bryne: A patient coming here for treatment can expect great care. We are very knowledgeable, we do this on a daily basis. They will get a lot of education, knowing what to expect from start to finish in their infusion treatments.
- Erica Bass: Are there any facts about it that you feel like the general public doesn't know?
- Christie Bryne: Multiple myeloma is not curable. It is treatable. There's people definitely younger. I've treated people in their forties. So it's always something, if you're having symptoms, never hurts to be checked out.
- Erica Bass: Do you feel like patients are usually hopeful?
- Christie Bryne: I do. Multiple myeloma is not curable. It is very treatable. There's many treatment options. When patients are diagnosed and they get to my chair in infusion, they are very hopeful. They know there's many treatments lined up in case that one does not work.
- Erica Bass: Perfect. Let's see. Is there anything I didn't ask you that you'd like to share?
- Christie Bryne: Multiple myeloma is sometimes found incidentally, and it can be very slow growing and not requiring treatment at that time. If it does require treatment, they will review all the treatment options with the patients.
- Speaker 1: Thank you for listening, and tell us what you think of this podcast by rating and reviewing us. To stay up to date on what's happening in the cancer world, follow us on Twitter @UMRogelCancer. You can explore additional episodes at www.rogelcancercenter.org/podcasts. Cancer Wise is part of the new Michigan Medicine Podcast Network.



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