

# Part of the IMF Patient Education Tools Series

## Preventing Peripheral Neuropathy From Novel Agents for Multiple Myeloma

### Patient Education Sheet: Preventing Peripheral Neuropathy From Novel Agents for Multiple Myeloma

#### KEY POINTS

Peripheral neuropathy is a change in feeling in the arms, hands, fingers, legs, feet, toes, or other body parts. It can be a symptom of multiple myeloma or related to the use of medications to treat myeloma, such as novel therapies thalidomide and bortezomib. Managing peripheral neuropathy can reduce pain and other symptoms and can allow you to receive the best treatment for your myeloma. Your healthcare provider may change your dose or medication schedule to help manage your symptoms.

#### SYMPTOMS OF PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

You may have the following symptoms in toes and feet, fingers and hands, or lips.

- Numbness
- Tingling
- Burning pain
- Muscle weakness
- Sensitivity to touch
- Prickling sensations
- Sensation of cold in feet

Always report symptoms early to your healthcare team.

You may have an examination before treatment and at various times during treatment to see whether you have any symptoms of neuropathy. It is important to know when neuropathy affects your daily activities.

*Note.* For more information, please contact the International Myeloma Foundation (1-800-452-CURE; [www.myeloma.org](http://www.myeloma.org)). The foundation offers the Myeloma Manager™ Personal Care Assistant™ computer program to help patients and healthcare providers keep track of information and treatments. Visit <http://manager.myeloma.org> to download the free software.

*Note.* Patient education sheets were developed in June 2008 based on the International Myeloma Foundation Nurse Leadership Board's consensus guidelines. They may be reproduced for noncommercial use.

Two types of neuropathies exist: sensory and motor. The symptoms you should monitor and report to your healthcare provider are as follows.

- Sensory
  - Tingling, numbness, or pain in your hands or feet
  - Trouble hearing; ringing or buzzing in your ears
  - Weakness all over
- Motor
  - Trouble fastening buttons
  - Difficulty opening jars or feeling the shape of small objects in your hand
  - Trouble walking

#### MANAGING THE SYMPTOMS

The following suggestions may help you with symptoms of peripheral neuropathy. Always check with your healthcare provider before taking new medications.

- Massage the affected area with cocoa butter.
- Take B-complex vitamins.
- Take folic acid supplements.
- Take amino acid supplements.

If symptoms become more severe, your healthcare provider may recommend the following.

- Pain medication or other medication for nerve pain relief
- Stopping treatment for a period of time
- Lowering the dose of treatment
- Physical therapy

Taking care of peripheral neuropathy symptoms will allow you to move more easily and safely, carry out your daily activities, and prevent unnecessary pain and discomfort.



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