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[Amyloidosis - Symptoms and Signs](#) [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 02/2015

ON THIS PAGE: You will find out more about body changes and other things that can signal a problem that may need medical care. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

The symptoms of amyloidosis can vary widely, depending on the specific organ or number of organs affected by the buildup of amyloid protein(s). People with amyloidosis may experience the symptoms or signs listed below. Sometimes, people with amyloidosis do not show any of these symptoms, or these symptoms may be caused by another medical condition. All of these factors challenge doctors to make a timely and accurate diagnosis of amyloidosis because the symptoms may be similar to numerous other diseases and conditions that are more common than amyloidosis.

Symptoms of amyloidosis are usually determined by the organ or function that is affected by the protein buildup. For example:

- Amyloidosis in the kidneys will reduce the kidneys' ability to filter waste and break down proteins. As a result, large amounts of protein may be found in the urine, causing "foamy" urine. The kidneys may even stop working.
- Amyloidosis may cause the liver to greatly increase in size and function abnormally.
- Amyloidosis of the heart may cause an irregular heartbeat, called an arrhythmia, enlarge the heart, and cause poor heart function.
- Amyloidosis of the gastrointestinal tract may cause problems with the digestion and absorption of food nutrients, bleeding, blockages, and a thickened tongue, called macroglossia, as well as problems with the esophagus, including gastrointestinal reflux disease (GERD).

- A noncancerous swelling of the thyroid gland, called a goiter, may be caused by amyloidosis of the thyroid gland.
- Problems breathing, including shortness of breath, may occur from amyloidosis in the lungs.
- Numbness, tingling, or weakness in the arms or legs may develop. This condition is known as [peripheral neuropathy](#) [3]. Carpal tunnel syndrome may also occur.

Other general symptoms of amyloidosis include:

- [Fatigue](#) [4]
- [Unexplained weight loss](#) [5]
- [Anemia](#) [6], which is a low level of red blood cells
- Weak hand grip
- Skin changes, such as a rash around the eyes
- Clay-colored stools
- Joint pain

If you are concerned about one or more of the symptoms or signs on this list, please talk with your doctor. Your doctor will ask how long and how often you've been experiencing the symptom(s), in addition to other questions. This is to help find out the cause of the problem, called a [diagnosis](#) [7].

If amyloidosis is diagnosed, relieving symptoms remains an important part of your care and treatment. This may also be called symptom management, palliative care, or supportive care. Be sure to talk with your health care team about symptoms you experience, including any new symptoms or a change in symptoms.

The [next section in this guide is Diagnosis](#) [7], and it explains what tests may be needed to learn more about the cause of the symptoms. Or, use the menu on the side of your screen to choose another section to continue reading this guide.

Links

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/amyloidosis/symptoms-and-signs>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24588>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25048>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25263>

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25242>

[7] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18454>