Amyloidosis - Symptoms and Signs

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Symptoms and Signs

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 in this guide, use the colored boxes on the right side of your screen, or click ?Next? at the bottom.

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 and clinical presentation can mimic numerous other more common diseases and conditions. If you are concerned about a symptom or sign on this list, please talk with your doctor.

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 wastes 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 arrhythmia (irregular heart beat), 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 (macroglossia), as well as problems with the esophagus, including gastrointestinal reflux disease (GERD).
- A goiter (a noncancerous swelling of the thyroid gland) 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, a condition known as peripheral neuropathy [2], may develop. Carpal tunnel syndrome may also occur.

Other general symptoms of amyloidosis include:

- Fatigue [3]
- Unexplained weight loss [4]
- Anemia [5] (low level of red blood cells)
- Weak hand grip
- Skin changes, such as a rash around the eyes
- Clay-colored stools
- Joint pain

Your doctor will ask you questions about the symptoms you are experiencing to help find out the cause of the problem, called a diagnosis [6]. This may include how long you?ve been experiencing the symptom(s) and how often.

If amyloidosis is diagnosed, relieving symptoms and side effects is 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.

Choose ?Next? (below, right) to continue reading this guide to learn about what tests and scans you may have to learn more about the cause of your symptoms. Or, use the colored boxes located on the right side of your screen to visit any section.

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/about-us
[2] http://www.cancer.net/node/24588
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/25048

[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/25263
[5] http://www.cancer.net/node/25242
[6] http://www.cancer.net/node/18454