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Waldenström's Macroglobulinemia - Symptoms and Signs [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [2], 09/2013

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.

People with Waldenström?s macroglobulinemia may experience the following symptoms or signs. Sometimes, people with Waldenström?s macroglobulinemia do not show any of these symptoms. Or, these symptoms may be caused by a medical condition that is not cancer. If you are concerned about a symptom or sign on this list, please talk with your doctor.

- Fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss
- Enlarged lymph nodes or spleen
- Weakness, numbness, or other nervous system problems
- Abdominal swelling and diarrhea
- Weakness and shortness of breath
- Infections
- Raised, fleshy-colored lesions on the skin
- Changes in the color of the finger tips when exposed to cold
- Changes in vision

Certain symptoms, called B symptoms, may signal a more aggressive cancer. Doctors may refer to either ?A? or ?B? when describing the cancer overall.

A means that a person has not experienced B symptoms, listed below.

B means that a person has experienced the following symptoms:

- Unexplained weight loss
- Unexplained fever
- Heavy sweating, especially at night. Most patients report that either their nightclothes or the sheets on the bed are actually wet.
- Itchiness

Symptoms of hyperviscosity (thick blood)

IgM proteins are large molecules, and when they accumulate in the blood in high levels, the blood can become viscous or thick. This slows down the flow of blood to different parts of the body. Symptoms of hyperviscosity include:

- Vision problems
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Loss of coordination
- Headaches
- Nosebleeds and bleeding gums
- Fatigue

Your doctor will ask you questions about the symptoms you are experiencing to help find out the cause of the problem, called a diagnosis [3]. This may include how long you?ve been experiencing the symptom(s) and how often.

If cancer is diagnosed, relieving symptoms and side effects remains an important part of cancer 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 helps explain what tests and scans may be needed to learn more about the cause of the symptoms. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Diagnosis, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/waldenstr%C3%B6ms-macroglobulinemia/symptoms-and-signs
[2] http://www.cancer.net/about-us
[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/19327