



The Training Brief

Quick Reference mini-training Topics Multiple Myeloma

The purpose of this training topic is to understand the signs and symptoms of Multiple Myeloma. Firefighters have a 1.53 times greater risk of being diagnosed with this cancer than the general public.

Discussion

Fact: Firefighters have a 1.53 times greater risk of being diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma than the general public.

Key Points: According to the 2006 "LeMasters Cancer Risk Among Firefighters: A Review and Meta-analysis of 32 Studies" "There are essentially no known risk factors for multiple myeloma other than occupational exposures (e.g., paints, herbicides, insecticides, engine exhausts, and organic solvents".

Action: Take the steps needed to reduce your exposure to carcinogens. Using SCBA from the start of a fire through overhaul, performing Personal Exposure Reduction, and utilize wipes on all exposed areas of skin.

It cannot be understated about the importance of annual medical exams.

Download and bring the form to your Physician:

https://firefightercancersupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Primary-care-cancer-evaluations-for-firefighters_HamrockMD_2016_FCSN.pdf

Download and print the form. Bring it to your primary care physician. Discuss the risks firefighters have in regards to occupational cancer.

Make the necessary changes

Multiple myeloma is a cancer of plasma cells. In general, when plasma cells become cancerous and grow out of control, this is called multiple myeloma.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Bone pain, which can be in any bone, but is most often in the back, the hips, and skull
- Bone weakness, either all over (osteoporosis), or where there is a plasmacytoma
- Broken bones (fractures), sometimes from only a minor stress or injury
- Anemia: A reduced number of red blood cells that can cause weakness, a reduced ability to exercise, shortness of breath, and dizziness.
- Leukopenia: Too few white blood cells that can lower resistance to infections such as pneumonia.
- Thrombocytopenia: When blood platelet counts are low which may cause serious bleeding even with minor scrapes, cuts, or bruises.
- Extreme thirst, leading to drinking a lot
- Urinating (peeing) a lot
- Dehydration
- Kidney problems and even kidney failure
- Severe constipation,
- Abdominal (belly) pain
- Loss of appetite
- Weakness
- Feeling drowsy
- Confusion
- Sudden severe back pain
- Numbness, most often in the legs
- Muscle weakness, most often in the legs.
- Dizziness
- Symptoms of a stroke, like weakness on one side of the body and slurred speech
- Shortness of breath
- Itching
- Leg swelling.
- Infections (Multiple Myeloma Patients are more likely to get infections).

Source: American Cancer Society