

## How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand rub (special gel) available at the main entrance of the hospital and at the entrance to every ward before coming in to and after leaving the ward or hospital. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand rub. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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## Patient Information - IgG or IgA

# Monoclonal Gammopathy of Unknown Significance (MGUS)

### Patient Information Leaflet

If you require a translation or an alternative format for this leaflet please ask for assistance.

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

The recent tests which you have had shows that you have an abnormal protein in your blood. This condition is known as Monoclonal Gammopathy of Unknown Significance (MGUS).

MGUS is characterised by the presence of an abnormal protein in the blood called a paraprotein or M protein. Paraproteins are produced by the lymphoid cells in the lymph glands and bone marrow that produce antibodies to fight infection.

In MGUS a particular type of lymphoid cell overgrows and produces too much of one type of antibody but this does not cause any problem.

MGUS is a common condition in older people and is present in about 3% of people over 70 years of age. This condition does not cause any symptoms and the reasons it develops are not known.

## Why does MGUS matter?

Occasionally people with MGUS develop a type of cancer called Myeloma.

## How is MGUS diagnosed?

The abnormal protein is usually discovered by chance during routine or unrelated blood tests. Since a paraprotein can be found in patients with other medical conditions, such as myeloma, it is important to distinguish between these as patients with MGUS do not require any treatment.

Myeloma is a treatable type of cancer of the plasma cells and is associated with problems such as bone pain and anaemia, which do not occur in MGUS. The type of tests that are used to distinguish between MGUS and myeloma include blood tests,

X-rays, and bone marrow tests, but these tests may not be necessary in every patient.

If the paraprotein is very low, there are no symptoms, and blood tests show normal calcium and kidney function the diagnosis is almost certainly MGUS. Please be aware that a monoclonal gammopathy does not represent cancer.

However, because patients with monoclonal proteins are at risk of developing multiple myeloma or related disorders, lifelong monitoring is recommended, (the risk is approximately 1% per year). The presence of the protein, since it is derived from bone marrow plasma cells, is not affected by your diet or the amount of protein you consume. There is no increased risk of monoclonal gammopathies in first-degree family members; therefore, your siblings and children do not need to be screened for the presence of an abnormal protein.

**Remember- Most patients will never develop any serious blood problem or require any treatment.**

However you should be aware of the following symptoms which could suggest the development of myeloma:

- Unexplained bone pain particularly pain which is consistently in one area, is constant and gets progressively worse. For example pain in the back, ribs, hip or pelvis. Pain in the lower legs, ankles, feet, wrists or hands is unlikely to be due to myeloma.
- Worsening shortness of breath.

If you have any of these symptoms or you are concerned seek advice from your GP.