POEMS by Carly Mandel

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*Overview*

*POEMS* stands for these signs and symptoms:

**P**olyneuropathy. Numbness, tingling and weakness in your legs —

and over time,

maybe in your hands —

and difficulty breathing.

**O**rganomegaly.

Enlarged spleen, liver or lymph nodes.

**E**ndocrinopathy.

Abnormal hormone levels that can result in

underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism),

diabetes,

sexual problems,

fatigue,

swelling in your limbs,

and problems with metabolism and

other essential functions.

**M**onoclonal plasmaproliferative disorder.

Abnormal bone marrow cells (plasma cells)

that produce a protein (monoclonal protein)

that can be found in the bloodstream.

**S**kin changes.

More color than normal on your skin,

possibly thicker skin and

increased facial or leg hair.

The cause of *POEMS* syndrome isn't known.

But people with *POEMS* syndrome have an increased number of plasma cells.

These cells produce an abnormal amount of a type of protein,

-

which can damage other parts of the body.

*POEMS* syndrome is a rare blood disorder that damages your nerves and affects many other parts of the body.

*POEMS* syndrome can be misdiagnosed because the signs and symptoms mimic those of other disorders.

*POEMS* syndrome progresses rapidly without treatment and may become life-threatening, so early diagnosis is important.

Treatment for *POEMS* syndrome may improve your symptoms but doesn't cure the condition. Treatment options include

radiation therapy,

chemotherapy and

peripheral blood stem cell transplant.

The outlook for people with *POEMS* syndrome has improved greatly over the past decade or so.

Clinical trials

Explore Mayo Clinic studies testing new treatments,

interventions and

tests as a means to prevent,

detect,

treat or

manage this disease.

*By Mayo Clinic Staff*

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