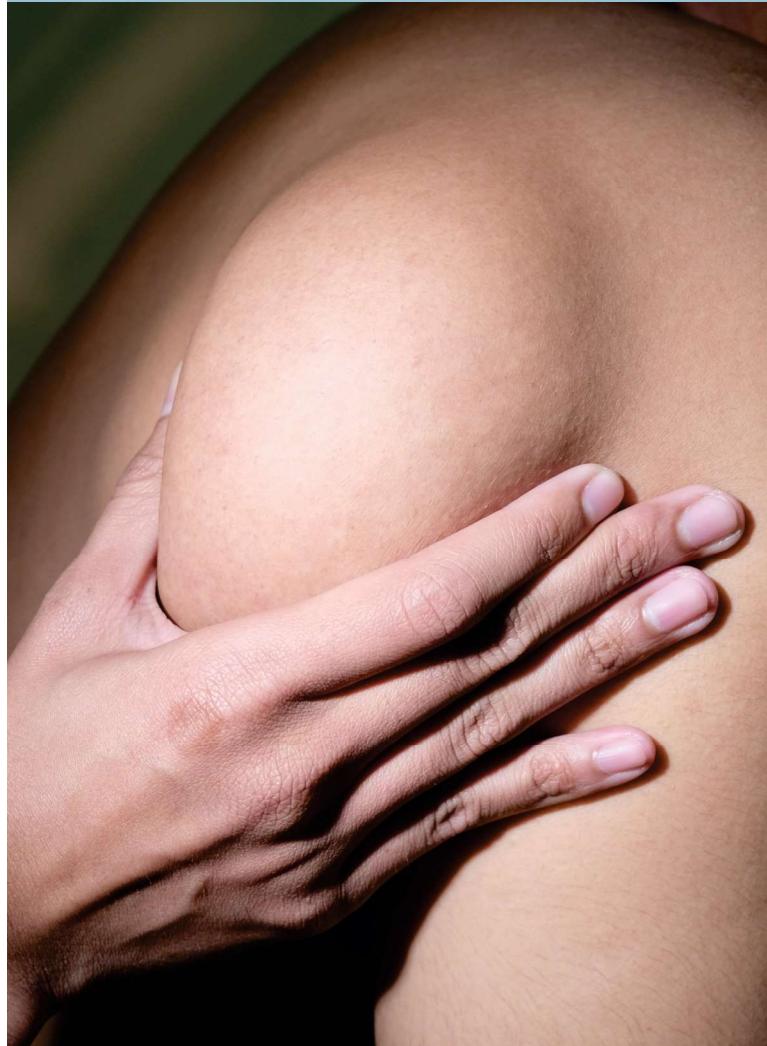
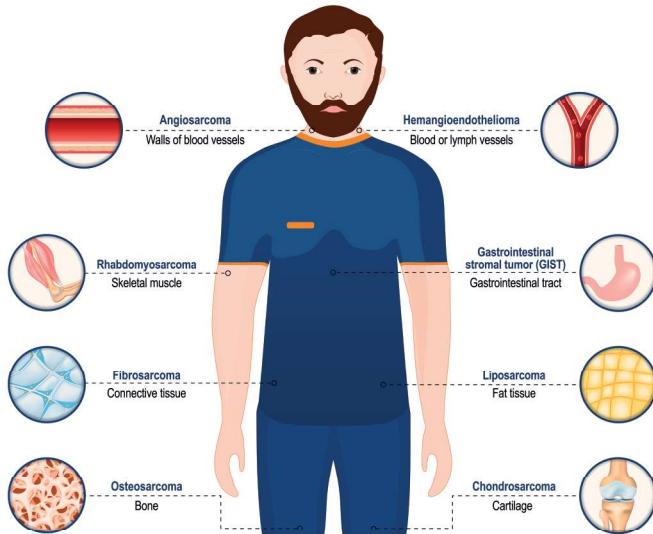


Guide to SOFT TISSUE SARCOMAS



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Types of sarcoma



What is a soft tissue sarcoma?

A soft tissue sarcoma is a cancer that grows from one of the "soft tissues" in the body. The soft tissues in the body include the muscles, nerves, blood vessels, and fat.

A soft tissue sarcoma happens when normal cells in a soft tissue change into abnormal cells and grow out of control. There are many types of soft tissue sarcomas. The type depends on the kind of soft tissue the cancer grows from.

Soft tissue sarcomas are more common in adults than in children. They can grow anywhere in the body, but they happen most often in the arms or legs. They can also grow in the belly, or on the belly or chest wall.

What are the symptoms of a soft tissue sarcoma?

The most common symptom is a lump that grows slowly over weeks to months. The lump doesn't usually cause pain.

Having a lump doesn't always mean you have a soft tissue sarcoma. But if you have a lump that doesn't go away, tell your doctor.

Other symptoms of a soft tissue sarcoma depend on where the cancer is in your body. For example, a soft tissue sarcoma in the belly can cause belly pain, bloody bowel movements, or make you feel full after eating only a small amount of food.

Is there a test for a soft tissue sarcoma?

Yes. To check if a lump is a soft tissue sarcoma, doctors usually do:

- **An imaging test** — Imaging tests create pictures of the inside of the body. Doctors can do different imaging tests, including an X-ray, MRI scan, or CT scan.
- **A biopsy** — During a biopsy, your doctor will take a small sample of tissue from the lump. Then another doctor will look at the sample under a microscope to see if it has cancer.

What is soft tissue sarcoma staging?

Cancer staging is a way in which doctors find out whether a cancer has spread past the layer of tissue where it began and, if so, how far.

The right treatment will depend a lot on the type and stage of your soft tissue sarcoma, and where it is in your body.

How is a soft tissue sarcoma treated?

Most people with a soft tissue sarcoma have 1 or more of the following treatments:

- **Surgery** — Doctors can sometimes do surgery to remove the soft tissue sarcoma.
- **Radiation therapy** — Radiation kills cancer cells.
- **Chemotherapy** — Chemotherapy is the medical term for medicines that kill cancer cells or stop them from growing.
- **Other medicines** — These include medicines called "targeted therapies" that work only for cancers that have certain characteristics. Your doctor might do tests to see if your soft tissue sarcoma might respond to these types of medicines.

What happens after treatment?

After treatment, you will be checked every so often to see if the soft tissue sarcoma comes back.

Follow-up tests usually include exams and imaging tests. You should also watch for new lumps, because a new lump could mean the soft tissue sarcoma has come back.

What happens if the soft tissue sarcoma comes back?

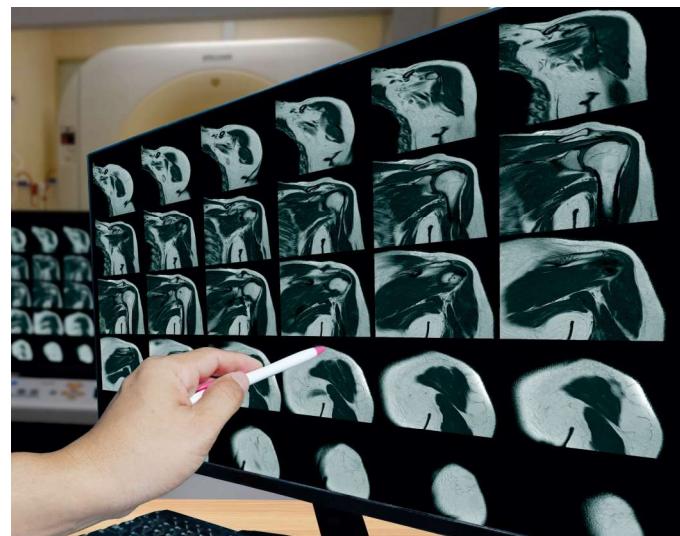
If the soft tissue sarcoma comes back, your doctor might treat it with surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, or targeted therapies.

What else should I do?

It is important to follow all your doctor's instructions about visits and tests. It's also important to talk to your doctor about any side effects or problems you have during treatment.

Getting treated for a soft tissue sarcoma can involve making many choices, such as what treatment to have.

Always let your doctors know how you feel about a treatment. Any time you are offered a treatment, ask:



- What are the benefits of this treatment?
- Is the treatment likely to help me live longer?
- Will the treatment reduce or prevent symptoms?
- What are the downsides to this treatment?
- Are there other options besides this treatment?
- What happens if I do not have this treatment?

What not to do?

Sarcomas are curable in most instances. Avoid the following as it may affect the outcome in your sarcoma care:

- Delay the diagnosis or create gaps in treatment
- Surgery without diagnosis at a specialist Musculoskeletal Oncology centre
- Alternative medicine instead of recommended treatment

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