



# Newsletter

CANCER CONSULTANTS OF AMERICA

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CANCER AND UNDERSTANDING®

## Cancer Answers

### Sarcoma – Connective Tissue Cancer

About 90% of the human body consists of soft tissue which is connected to an internal framework of hard tissue that we refer to as the skeleton. This connective tissue is made up of cells that can incur mutations within the DNA thereby causing the cell to transform into a particular type of cancer of the connective tissue referred to as sarcoma. This lesser known and rare form of cancer with origins in connective tissue is known for its ability to spread to other areas of the body containing soft tissue. The sarcoma cells break away from the primary tumor and travel to other locations in the body using the lymphatic and circulatory systems. Notably, cancer cells tend to thrive in secondary environments that are similar to their primary environments. Since a large percentage of the body is mainly composed of soft tissue with connective tissue, it is quite easy for primary sarcoma cells to find a new environment in a different location of the body that also has soft tissue. The most common secondary sites of sarcoma metastasis are the lungs, liver, and bones.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) considers there to be over 50 different subtypes of sarcomas that are divided into two categories: soft tissue sarcoma and bone cancer. Sarcomas are more commonly identified earlier in life impacting children and young adults. Often times, patients report feeling a lump buried within an area of soft tissue that contains fat, muscle and nervous tissues. These lumps are typically painless but fast-growing. The exact cause(s) of sarcoma are still being debated but most reports include a description of sporadic tumor development. A familial genetic component has been described for sarcomas and is associated with Li-Fraumeni Syndrome. People with Li-Fraumeni Syndrome are predisposed to genetic mutations as a result of a malfunctioning tumor suppressor gene, *TP53*. This tumor suppressor gene codes for a protein that has been given the nickname "Guardian of the Genome" for its ability to repair mutations within the genome. Furthermore, many geneticists consider *TP53* to be the most important gene in the human genome. When the "Guardian of the Genome" fails to function properly, the downstream impact can be catastrophic.

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The treatment options for sarcomas are quite routine and involve surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. The surgical removal of the tumor is often a therapy with curative results when performed during the early stages of the disease. Radiation therapy can be applied either before (neoadjuvant) the surgery or after (adjuvant) the surgery. Radiation therapy is designed to shrink the tumor which can be useful in cases when the tumor has wrapped around critical structures such as blood vessels, nerves, and organs. The chemotherapeutic approach employs toxic substances that are consumed by the rapidly dividing cancer cells which ultimately kills the cells. The 5-year survival rate is 83% when the localized tumor is treated. When the tumor has infiltrated nearby lymph nodes and surrounding structures, the survival rate drops to 60%. In more advanced stages of sarcoma when the cancer has spread to other areas of the body, the survival rate is lowest at 17%. Taken together, people diagnosed with sarcoma have the greatest chances of survival when the cancer is detected early and remains localized to its connective tissue origins.

Submit your **Cancer Answers** topics to [info@CancerConsultantsOfAmerica.com](mailto:info@CancerConsultantsOfAmerica.com)

### We Are Available to You


Please contact us today if you would like more information about how our services can benefit you and your family.

#### Services:


- Individual and Family Cancer Education
- Medical Appointment Liaison Services
- Information Seminars and Public Speaking Events

### Fun Facts – June

#### Cancer Awareness Month:

- National Cancer Survivor Month (Lavender) 

June 1 – Start of Hurricane Season 

June 2 – National Rotisserie Chicken Day 

June 8 – National Best Friends Day 

June 14 – International Bath Day 

June 21 – National Selfie Day 

June 27 – Ice Cream Cake Day 


## Cancer Consultants Of America

Phone: (561) 252-3090

E-mail: [info@CancerConsultantsOfAmerica.com](mailto:info@CancerConsultantsOfAmerica.com)

[www.CancerConsultantsOfAmerica.com](http://www.CancerConsultantsOfAmerica.com)

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June 2026