

Non-Rhabdomyosarcoma Soft Tissue Sarcoma for the Pediatric Patient

What is non-rhabdomyosarcoma soft tissue sarcoma?

Childhood soft tissue sarcoma is a disease in which cancer cells begin growing in soft tissue. The soft tissues include muscles, tendons (bands of fiber that connect muscles to bones), fibrous (connective) tissues, fat, blood vessels, nerves, and synovial tissues (tissues around joints). Soft tissues connect, support, and surround other body parts and organs.

Soft tissue sarcomas are rare in children and adolescents. When they occur they are most commonly found in the trunk, arms, and legs. Soft tissue sarcomas are more likely to develop in children who have specific genetic conditions or who have previously received radiation therapy.

Soft tissue sarcomas are classified according to the type of soft tissue they originate from. The types of soft tissue sarcoma include:

- desmoid tumor
- liposarcoma
- hemangiopericytoma
- extraskeletal osteosarcoma
- clear cell sarcoma
- fibrosarcoma
- leiomyosarcoma
- synovial sarcoma
- extraskeletal chondrosarcoma
- epithelioid sarcoma
- malignant fibrous histiocytoma
- angiosarcoma
- malignant schwannoma
- alveolar soft part sarcoma
- desmoplastic small round cell tumor

What are the symptoms of non-rhabdomyosarcoma soft tissue sarcoma?

The first symptom of soft tissue sarcoma may be a solid mass or lump. If the mass interferes with a function of the body it may cause other symptoms such as pain. Soft tissue sarcoma rarely causes fever or weight loss.

How is non-rhabdomyosarcoma soft tissue sarcoma diagnosed and treated?

If a patient has symptoms of a soft tissue sarcoma, the doctor may order a biopsy, x-rays, and other tests to find out if the cancer cells have spread to other parts of the body. This is called staging. It is important to know the stage of the disease to plan treatment.

Treatment options are based on whether the cancer has spread, the amount of tumor left after surgery, and whether the child has reached full growth. Surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy are all treatment options, either alone or in combination.