



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Soft tissue sarcoma

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

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# What is soft tissue sarcoma?

Sarcoma is a type of cancer that develops from cells in the supporting or connective tissue such as muscle, fat, nerves, blood vessels, bone and cartilage.

There are many different types of sarcoma. This leaflet will provide you with information about soft tissue sarcoma.

## Types of soft tissue sarcoma

There are several types of soft tissue sarcoma which may develop within the skin or in the soft tissues under the skin. These present as a physical lump. They include:

- Kaposi Sarcoma
- Pleomorphic Sarcoma
- Leiomyosarcoma
- Liposarcoma
- Angiosarcoma
- Malignant Periperal Nerve Sheath Tumour (MPNST)

If you are diagnosed with a soft tissue sarcoma, you will be told of the type of sarcoma.

For further information on your specific diagnosis please go to [www.sarcoma.org.uk](http://www.sarcoma.org.uk) or ask your consultant or clinical nurse specialist for the relevant information.

# Diagnosing soft tissue sarcoma

Soft tissue sarcoma is diagnosed using a combination of the following:

- Physical examination of a lump presenting within or under the skin.
- biopsy – this is when a doctor or surgical nurse removes a small sample of tissue from a suspicious lump or lesion. The sample is then analysed in the laboratory by a pathologist.
- a scan – this is when pictures are taken of the inside of your body. Scans may include an Ultrasound, CT (computer tomography), MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and PET-CT (positron emission tomography-computer tomography).

These diagnostic procedures enable your doctor to obtain as much information as possible. This includes the size and location of the sarcoma and whether it has spread to other parts of your body.

This information helps your doctor to decide the best treatment plan for you.

Following your sarcoma diagnosis, you will be referred to the specialist sarcoma team for treatment recommendations.

# Treatment for soft tissue sarcoma

Treatment recommendations will consider:

- Your general health.
- The site of your sarcoma.
- The tumour size.
- The grade of your sarcoma i.e. How the cells appear under the microscope.

## Treatment options:

Surgery – this is the most common treatment for soft tissue sarcoma. Surgery may be the only treatment required if the sarcoma is small, accessible and has not spread to other parts of the body.

Radiotherapy – this is when high energy rays are used to destroy cancer cells. Radiotherapy may be offered after surgical treatment to reduce the risk of the sarcoma coming back in the same place. Radiotherapy can also be used to treat sarcoma that cannot be removed surgically.

Systemic drug treatments – treatments available to prevent the risk of the sarcoma coming back following surgery or to treat or manage sarcoma that has already spread to other parts of the body.

# Follow up after treatment for soft tissue sarcoma

As part of your treatment pathway, you will be allocated a sarcoma clinical nurse specialist (CNS). Your CNS will be your key worker for support and information throughout your treatment and follow up period.

After treatment, depending on the risk associated with your particular diagnosis, you may be offered regular follow up appointments over a number of years. You will receive a follow-up schedule from your consultant or sarcoma clinical nurse specialist. The follow up reviews may consist of:

- A chance to discuss symptoms.
- An examination to look for any signs of the sarcoma returning. This may include an MRI or ultrasound if required after examination.
- A chest x-ray to rule out any secondary cancers occurring in the lungs.

For more information visit **[www.sarcoma.org.uk](http://www.sarcoma.org.uk)** or speak to your consultant or clinical nurse specialist.  
[Website accessed November 2024]

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Skin Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist Team, Specialist Nurse Office, Corridor A, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York. YO31 8HE.

Advice Line: 01904 721719

Email: [yhs-tr.skincancer.cns.team@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.skincancer.cns.team@nhs.net)

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:  
[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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