

Osteosarcoma

Information for patients



What is osteosarcoma?

Osteosarcoma is a malignant tumour that occurs in the bone. Most osteosarcomas appear in the long bones of the body, such as the femur (thigh bone), the tibia (shinbone) or the humerus (upper arm), but they can appear in any bones.

Osteosarcomas are primary bone cancers. That means the cancer starts in the bone itself. It is the most common type of primary bone cancer with around a third of all primary bone cancers diagnosed being osteosarcomas; approximately 150 people per year.

Osteosarcomas are most commonly found in teenagers and young adults and are slightly more common in males. About 60% of cases occur in people between 10 and 20 years of age.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is confirmed following imaging (X-ray, MRI scans,) and histology (results) from the biopsy taken from the tumour tissue. Osteosarcomas are also 'graded' depending on how fast they are growing and how likely they are to spread to other places in the body.

As with all cancers it is important to check for any potential cancer spread (metastasis) to other sites in the body. This is done using CT or PET CT scans. Osteosarcoma most commonly spreads to the lungs. We will carry out careful monitoring of your lungs with PET/ CT chest scans throughout your treatment and for a period of years afterwards.

Treatment options

The usual treatment for osteosarcoma is surgery to remove the tumour, with chemotherapy given before and after surgery. Treatment options will depend on a number of factors, such as:

- the position, size and grade of the tumour
- whether it has spread anywhere else
- your general health.

The chemotherapy is an important treatment for most people with osteosarcoma as it can greatly improve the results of surgical treatment. It is usually given before surgery to reduce the tumour size and continues after surgery in order to destroy any cancer cells that may remain.

After your treatment has finished, your doctors will want you to come back for regular scans and to see how you are.

Further reading

Macmillan booklet:

Understanding Primary Bone Cancer

<http://be.macmillan.org.uk/be/p-236-understanding-primary-bone-cancer.aspx>

Websites:

<http://www.macmillan.org.uk/Cancerinformation/Cancertypes/Childrenscancers/Typesofchildrenscancers/osteosarcoma.aspx>

www.macmillan.org.uk/Cancerinformation/teensandyoungadults/Infoforteensandyoungadults.aspx

Further support

Macmillan Cancer Support

Tel: 0808 080 2020

<http://www.macmillan.org.uk/home.aspx>

Oxford Sarcoma

<http://www.oxfordsarcoma.co.uk/>

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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www.ouh.nhs.uk/patient-guide/leaflets/library.aspx

