

FAQs About Liposarcoma

What Is Liposarcoma?

Liposarcoma is a rare type of tumor that is thought to arise from lipocytes, or fat cells, within the soft tissue in the body. The most common types of liposarcoma include well-differentiated, dedifferentiated, myxoid / round cell, and pleomorphic. Liposarcoma is the most common type of sarcoma and accounts for 20% of sarcoma cases every year.

What Are The Sub-Types Of Liposarcoma?

Well-differentiated liposarcoma (WDLS) is the most common type of liposarcoma, accounting for between 30-50% of these tumors. Dedifferentiated liposarcoma (DDLs) is rarer and can develop in the background of a preexisting well-differentiated liposarcoma. Both well-differentiated and dedifferentiated liposarcoma may occur anywhere in the body, however, the most common site is the retroperitoneum while other sites can include the chest wall, mediastinum, and head or neck.

Myxoid liposarcoma (MLS) usually presents in the extremities and typically in younger patients. Myxoid/round cell liposarcoma (MRCLS) is a subtype of a higher grade of the myxoid variant.

Pleomorphic liposarcoma (PLS) is a very rare sub-type that accounts for only 5-10% of lipomatous tumors and can take on a range of shapes and sizes.

Signs & Symptoms

A liposarcoma can be a palpable, firm mass. It is important to note that liposarcoma is not lipoma, which is a benign and soft or rubbery mass. Patients may experience localized symptoms dependent on tumor location.

What Causes Liposarcoma?

While there is no exact cause for liposarcoma, there are some factors that may increase your risk. Exposure to vinyl chloride may increase your risk. Additionally, some genetic factors including hereditary retinoblastoma and Li-Fraumeni Syndrome have ties to liposarcoma.

How Will I Know If I Have Liposarcoma?

Liposarcoma is diagnosed using a combination of imaging and a biopsy. CT and MRI scans are good indicators for liposarcoma, as these tumours have a unique imaging appearance. However, an image-guided biopsy must be done to confirm this diagnosis.

Common Treatments

Treatment for liposarcoma is dependent on the size, location, and stage. The most common treatment for localized liposarcoma is a surgical removal of the tumor. Following surgery, adjuvant therapies such as chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy may be recommended. Treatment plans will depend on the type of liposarcoma, location, and a patient's overall health. Please note it is important to consult your medical team when making important decisions about your treatment plan.

For more information, contact Liposarcoma Support Network at support@liposarcomasupport.org

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