



University of Michigan
C.S. Mott Children's Hospital

Solid Tumor Oncology Program

Rhabdomyosarcoma

Rhabdomyosarcoma– is a cancerous tumor that originates in the soft tissues of the body including the muscles, tendons and connective tissues. It can occur in many places in the body, most commonly around the structures of the head and neck, the urogenital tract and the arms or legs and is the most common soft tissue tumor in children. Embryonal rhabdomyosarcoma, the most common type, usually occurs in younger children and is generally found in tumors of the head, neck and genitourinary tract. Alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma tends to occur in older children and is more commonly found on the extremities.

Symptoms may include:

- Abdominal pain- may be caused from pressure on other organs near the Lumps or swelling in the arms, legs, abdomen or back that grows quickly or doesn't go away after a few weeks (may be painful or painless)
- Bleeding from the nose, vagina, rectum or throat (may occur if the tumor is in these areas)
- Trouble having a bowel movement or poor control of urine (if mass is in the abdomen and compresses on other organs)

Diagnosis

Diagnosis of rhabdomyosarcoma begins with a thorough health history and performing a comprehensive physical examination. Some testing will be required and may include an x-ray, an ultrasound, a CT scan, an MRI, and a bone scan. A biopsy to confirm the diagnosis is performed by removing a small piece of tissue from the tumor for examination under a microscope. A bone marrow biopsy may also be required to determine if the cancer has spread to the bone marrow.

If a rhabdomyosarcoma is the diagnosis, your doctor will stage the tumor, which determines if and how far the cancer has spread. Staging the tumor will help determine a treatment plan.

Treatment

Every child's treatment plan is individualized, based on the patient's needs and the specific tumor, utilizing cutting-edge technology and the latest research. Treatment options include (alone or in combination):

- Surgery (to remove all or part of the tumor, metastatic disease and any involved lymph nodes)
- Chemotherapy
- Radiation therapy
- Supportive care medications (for the side effects of treatment)
- Antibiotics (to prevent/treat infections)
- Continuous follow-up care (to manage disease and detect any recurrence of the tumor)