

ASCO ANSWERS

THE EWING FAMILY OF TUMORS

WHAT IS THE EWING FAMILY OF TUMORS?

Ewing family of tumors (EFT) is a group of cancers that affect the bones or nearby soft tissues. The three main types of tumors in EFT are Ewing's tumor of the bone, also called Ewing's sarcoma; extraosseous Ewing's (EOE); and peripheral primitive neuroectodermal tumor (PPNET). EFT occurs most often in teenagers.

WHERE IS EFT FOUND IN THE BODY?

Ewing's sarcoma, the most common type of EFT, is found in the bones. EOE grows in soft tissues outside the bones. PPNET is a rare tumor found in the bones, as well as the soft tissues. PPNET includes Askin's tumor, which develops in the chest wall. EFT of the bone occurs most often in the legs, spine, ribs, or pelvis. EFT of the soft tissue is usually found in the thighs, pelvis, spine, chest, or feet.

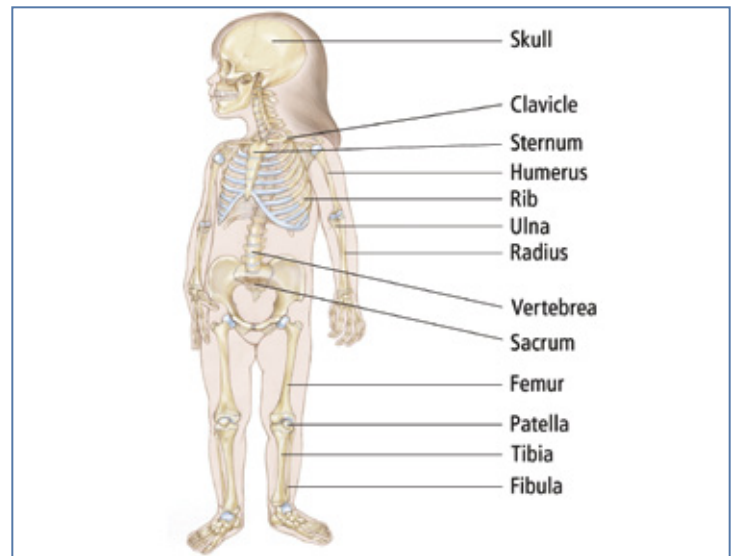


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Find additional cancer information at www.cancer.net.

WHAT DOES STAGE MEAN?

The stage is a way of describing a cancer, such as where it is located, if or where it has spread, and if it is affecting the functions of other organs in the body. Doctors describe EFT as localized (hasn't spread from where the cancer started), metastatic (has spread to other parts of the body), or recurrent (has come back after treatment). More information is available at www.cancer.net/ewings.

HOW IS EFT TREATED?

The treatment of EFT depends on the size and location of the tumor, whether the tumor has spread, and the child's overall health. Children and teens with EFT are often treated in clinical trials. Typically, treatments include systemic treatments (those that treat the entire body), such as chemotherapy and stem cell transplantation, combined with localized treatments (those that treat the tumor itself), such as surgery and radiation treatment. The doctor may first surgically remove the tumor or use radiation treatment (if surgery is not possible) and then give chemotherapy. After chemotherapy, surgery or radiation treatment (followed by additional chemotherapy) can eliminate any remaining EFT cells. Or, chemotherapy may be used first, followed by surgery to remove the tumor and some surrounding tissue.

When making treatment decisions, consider a clinical trial; most children with cancer are treated as part of one. Talk with your child's doctor about all treatment options. The side effects of EFT treatment can often be prevented or managed with the help of your child's health care team.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD OR TEEN COPE WITH EFT?

Helping your child or teenager understand a cancer diagnosis is a key part of the coping process. Children and many adolescents with cancer should be treated at a pediatric cancer center. These centers not only provide access to the latest treatments, they offer age-appropriate programs for social and emotional needs. Encouraging your child and other family members to share their emotions can be helpful in managing the diagnosis, treatment, and healing process.

ASCO Answers is a series of fact sheets produced by the American Society of Clinical Oncology. ASCO is the world's leading professional organization representing doctors of all oncology subspecialties who care for people with cancer.

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE DOCTOR

Regular communication is important in making informed decisions about your child's health care. Consider asking the following questions of your child's doctors:

- What type of EFT has been diagnosed?
- Where is the tumor located?
- Can you explain my child's pathology report (laboratory test results) to me?
- Would you explain my child's treatment options?
- What clinical trials are open to my child?
- What treatment plan do you recommend for my child? Why?
- Who is part of the treatment team, and what does each member do?
- How will this treatment affect my child's daily life? Will he or she be able to go to school and perform his or her usual activities?
- If I'm worried about managing the costs related to my child's cancer care, who can help me with these concerns?
- What short-term and long-term side effects may be associated with my child's cancer treatment?
- What follow-up tests will my child need, and how often will he or she need them?
- Where can I find emotional support for my child? For my family?
- Whom do I call for questions or problems?
- Is there anything else I should be asking?

Additional questions to ask the doctor can be found at www.cancer.net/ewings.

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www.cancer.net, or call 888-651-3038.**

Cancer.Net™ 

Doctor-Approved Patient Information from ASCO®

TERMS TO KNOW

Benign:

A tumor that is not cancerous

Biopsy:

Removal of a tissue sample that is then examined under a microscope to check for cancer cells

Chemotherapy:

The use of drugs to destroy cancer cells

Clinical trial:

A research study that tests a new treatment or drug

Lymph node:

A tiny, bean-shaped organ that fights infection

Malignant:

A tumor that is cancerous

Metastasis:

The spread of cancer from where the cancer began to another part of the body

Prognosis:

Chance of recovery

Radiation therapy:

The use of high-energy x-rays to destroy cancer cells

Stem cell transplant:

Procedure that replaces diseased bone marrow with healthy stem cells that create new bone marrow or provides stem cells to help the bone marrow recover after high-dose chemotherapy

Tumor:

An abnormal growth of body tissue