

## **Sarcoma - Alveolar Soft Part and Cardiac - Overview [1]**

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board \[2\]](#), 09/2013

**ON THIS PAGE:** You will find some basic information about these diseases and the parts of the body they may affect. This is the first page of Cancer.Net's Guide to Alveolar Soft Part Sarcoma and Cardiac Sarcoma. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen. Think of that menu as a roadmap to this full guide.

### **About sarcoma**

Soft tissue sarcoma is cancer that develops in the tissues that support and connect the body. A sarcoma can occur in fat tissue, muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, blood vessels, or lymph vessels. A sarcoma begins when normal cells change and grow uncontrollably, forming a mass called a tumor. A tumor can be benign (noncancerous) or malignant (cancerous, meaning it can spread to other parts of the body).

When a sarcoma is small, it usually does not cause problems and may go unnoticed or appear harmless. Most people with a small soft tissue sarcoma can be treated successfully. However, if the sarcoma grows, it can interfere with the body's normal activities, and it can spread to other parts of the body. This makes it more challenging to treat successfully.

Sarcoma can begin in any part of the body. About 50% start in an arm or leg, 40% start in the trunk or abdomen, and 10% start in the head or neck. Sarcoma is uncommon, accounting for about 1% of all cancers.

### **About alveolar soft part sarcoma and cardiac sarcoma**

Because there are several different types of soft tissue sarcoma, it is considered a family of related diseases, rather than a single, specific disease. Two specific types of sarcoma, alveolar soft part sarcoma (ASPS) and cardiac sarcoma, are discussed in this section. You can learn more about [other types of sarcoma \[3\]](#) elsewhere on Cancer.Net.

ASPS is a slow-growing tumor that usually begins in the thigh or leg, but it sometimes develops on the head or neck. People with ASPS have a specific genetic change called a translocation. See the [Risk Factors \[4\]](#) section for more details.

Cardiac sarcoma is a rare tumor that occurs in or on the heart. Although most heart tumors are benign, a cardiac sarcoma is usually cancerous. The most common tumor type is an angiosarcoma. This tumor occurs in one of the chambers of the heart or within the muscle tissue of the heart. In fact, about 25% of angiosarcomas develop inside the heart, blocking the flow of blood and causing symptoms [5].

### **Looking for More of an Overview?**

If you would like additional introductory information, view a short video led by an ASCO expert in sarcoma [6] that provides basic information and areas of research. Please note this link will take you to another section of Cancer.Net.

*To continue reading this guide, use the menu on the side of your screen to select another section.*

---

#### **Links:**

- [1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/sarcoma-alveolar-soft-part-and-cardiac/overview>
- [2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>
- [3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19604>
- [4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18439>
- [5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18440>
- [6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/27346>