

Bone cancer and treatments

Question: Is bone cancer caused by cancer that spreads from other areas?

Answer: There are two types of bone cancer. The most common is metastatic cancer, which is seen in older individuals and is the result of cancer that has spread from other areas. The five most common sites of origin are the breast, prostate, thyroid, kidney or lung.



**Ask the
Expert
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With these cases, patients may experience bone erosion, pain and fractures. Radiation or other treatments may be needed to address the bone cancer.

Although it is much rarer, bone cancer also can originate in the bones. The two most common types are osteosarcoma, which originates in the bone, and chondrosarcoma, which originates in the cartilage.

Osteosarcoma is generally seen in children and develops most often in rapid-growth areas such as around the knee. When seen in adults, it is generally thought to be secondary to previous radiation exposure.

Treatment for osteosarcoma includes chemotherapy and surgery. With advances in both chemotherapy and surgical techniques, most patients are treated with limb-salvage surgery.

Chondrosarcoma, which is more commonly seen in older adults, involves malignant cartilage cells that grow inside or on the bone. Because it is highly resistant to chemotherapy or radiation, surgery is the mainstay of treatment.

Recent research has resulted in new chemotherapy drugs that may turn out to be effective against this cancer. Studies on one of these drugs are now under way at the Virginia G. Piper Cancer Center at Scottsdale Healthcare.

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