

Is it  
**sarcoma?**

**L**arger than a golf ball  
**U**nder the fascia  
**M**ore painful  
**P**rogressing  
**S**hould be investigated



**Sarcoma UK has developed this diagnostic tool and golf ball keyring to help GPs recognise the presenting signs and symptoms of sarcoma.**

**The guidance aims to assist GPs in referring patients with suspected sarcoma quickly and easily to specialised sarcoma services for diagnosis and treatment.**

### About sarcoma

- Sarcoma is a rare heterogeneous form of cancer which accounts for approximately 1% of all malignancies
- In the UK, 3830 patients are diagnosed each year: 3330 are soft tissue sarcomas; 500 are bone sarcomas. In Scotland, just under 300 new cases of sarcoma are diagnosed each year. In Northern Ireland, 100 new cases of sarcoma are diagnosed each year
- Soft tissue sarcomas develop from soft tissue cells including smooth muscle cells, fat cells, fibrous connective tissue, skeletal muscles, synovium, blood vessels, breast ducts and nerves. Gastro-intestinal stromal tumour (GIST) is a soft tissue sarcoma that occurs in the gastrointestinal tract
- Bone sarcomas include chondrosarcoma, osteosarcoma, Ewing's sarcoma and chordoma
- 37% of sarcoma patients are aged under 50 years
- The most common site for soft tissue and bone sarcomas is on the extremities (trunk and limbs) and **patients will present initially to their GP with a visible lump or swelling**
- The five-year relative survival rate for all sarcomas is approximately 55% and lags behind other European countries

### Early diagnosis

- An early diagnosis of sarcoma is key to better survival outcomes
- One of the main prognostic factors for a patient with a sarcoma is the size of the tumour at diagnosis
- The larger the size of the sarcoma at diagnosis, the greater the chance of metastases
- 13% of patients present with metastases at diagnosis. This is directly proportional to size at diagnosis
- The average size of a sarcoma at diagnosis is currently 10cm
- If sarcomas are diagnosed when they are less than 5cm, it would increase the chance of a cure by at least 20% and ultimately save lives
- 12% of patients will die within one year of diagnosis. This is strongly related to size at diagnosis

### About Sarcoma UK

- Sarcoma UK is the only cancer charity in the UK focusing on all types of sarcoma
- We initiate change to raise sarcoma **awareness** and improve standards of treatment and care
- We seek answers through **research**
- We provide **support & information** for the sarcoma community
- We work collaboratively with healthcare professionals across all disciplines. This Tool has been produced with input from GPs and sarcoma clinicians



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The bone & soft tissue cancer charity

# Sarcoma Diagnostic Tool

- Over a third of sarcoma patients saw their GP three times or more before referral
- Over a third of sarcoma patients felt their health deteriorated whilst waiting for their first hospital appointment
- Only one in every four referrals for sarcoma is to a sarcoma specialist centre
- The average duration of symptoms before patients are referred for investigation for soft tissue sarcoma is over 1.5 years (92 weeks)

## Is it sarcoma?

### Soft tissue sarcomas

#### Clinical presentations

- **Any lump increasing in size**
- Size greater than 5cm (golf ball)
- Deep to the deep fascia
- Painful

### Primary bone sarcomas

#### Clinical presentations

- **Bone pain, particularly at night**
- Mass/swelling
- Restricted movement in a joint

#### Further investigation

- Refer to a sarcoma specialist centre or diagnostic clinic under the urgent referral criteria (NICE Referral Guidelines for Suspected Cancer)
- Imaging (MRI) & biopsy (core needle) should only be performed under the direction of a sarcoma specialist centre

#### Further investigation

- Refer for x-ray under the urgent referral criteria (NICE Referral Guidelines for Suspected Cancer)
- If findings suggest bone sarcoma, refer urgently to sarcoma specialist centre for further investigations including imaging & biopsy

**All patients with a suspected soft tissue or bone sarcoma should be referred for diagnosis at a sarcoma specialist centre or at a diagnostic clinic under the direction of a sarcoma specialist centre.**

#### Sarcoma Specialist Centres

- Regional centres throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Five national bone sarcoma centres
- Five regional centres in Scotland, part of the Scottish Sarcoma Network (a managed clinical network)
- Details of centres are available at: [www.sarcoma.org.uk/specialistcentres](http://www.sarcoma.org.uk/specialistcentres)
- Check local pathways for sarcoma