Uterine Sarcoma Causes, Risk Factors, and Prevention

Learn about the risk factors for uterine sarcoma and if there are things you might be able to do to help lower your risk.

Risk Factors

A risk factor is anything that increases your chance of getting a disease such as cancer. Learn more about the risk factors for uterine sarcoma.

- Risk Factors for Uterine Sarcoma
- What Causes Uterine Sarcoma?

Prevention

Most cases of uterine sarcoma cannot be prevented. Although pelvic radiation increases the risk of developing a uterine sarcoma, the benefit of pelvic radiation in treating other cancers far outweighs the risk of developing a rare cancer such as uterine sarcoma many years later.

- Can Uterine Sarcoma Be Prevented?
Pelvic radiation therapy

Radiation to the pelvis can increase your risk for developing uterine sarcoma. This has been seen sometimes after someone has had radiation to treat cervical cancer or rectal cancer. These cancers usually are diagnosed 5 to 25 years after the radiation treatment.

Congenital (heritable) retinoblastoma

Women who have had a type of eye cancer called congenital (heritable) retinoblastoma as a child have an increased risk of soft tissue sarcomas, including uterine sarcomas.

Family history of kidney cancer

A rare family cancer syndrome called hereditary leiomyomatosis and renal cell cancer (HLRCC) has been linked to an increased risk of uterine sarcomas.

Tamoxifen

Although the risk is small, women taking tamoxifen to prevent or treat breast cancer have an increased risk of developing uterine sarcoma. These sarcomas often show up 2 to 5 years after starting tamoxifen. If you are taking tamoxifen, doctors recommend getting regular pelvic exams and more testing if you are having abnormal bleeding from...
What Causes Uterine Sarcoma?

Doctors don’t know exactly what causes most uterine sarcomas, but certain risk factors have been identified. Research is helping to learn more about this rare disease.
Scientists continue to learn about changes in the DNA of certain genes that help when normal uterine cells develop into sarcomas.

For example,

- Changes in the RB1, TP53, and PTEN genes have been found in uterine leiomyosarcomas.
- Lowgrade endometrial stromal sarcoma (ESS) is often linked with an abnormal gene called JAZF1SUZ12.
- Highgrade endometrial stromal sarcoma (ESS) has been linked with the abnormal gene YWHAENUTM.

You can learn more about research being done in What's New in Uterine Sarcoma Research and Treatment?

Hyperlinks


References


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Can Uterine Sarcoma Be Prevented?

- Pelvic radiation
- Tamoxifen

Most cases of uterine sarcoma cannot be prevented.

Pelvic radiation

Although pelvic radiation increases the risk of developing a uterine sarcoma, the benefit of pelvic radiation in treating other cancers far outweighs the risk of developing a rare cancer such as uterine sarcoma many years later.

Tamoxifen

The risk of developing uterine sarcomas while taking tamoxifen is small and there are not specific things you can do to prevent a uterine sarcoma if you're taking it. But doctors will most likely watch you closely with regular pelvic exams and ask you to get medical care as soon as possible if you start to bleed abnormally from the uterus.

References


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Our team is made up of doctors and oncology certified nurses with deep knowledge of cancer care as well as journalists, editors, and translators with extensive experience in medical writing.

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