

# Rhabdomyosarcoma

## What is rhabdomyosarcoma?

Childhood rhabdomyosarcoma is a rare type of cancer that occurs in soft tissues of the body. One of the areas that this disease can affect is the genitourinary tract, where it can cause tumors in the bladder, kidneys, testes, prostate, vulva, or vagina. Certain genetic conditions can increase the risk of rhabdomyosarcoma, but in most cases, the cause is not known.

## What are the symptoms?

If rhabdomyosarcoma occurs in the genitourinary tract, a patient may have pain or difficulty in emptying the bladder or bowels. There may also be blood in the urine. Rhabdomyosarcoma can cause areas of swelling as the tumor grows.

## How is rhabdomyosarcoma diagnosed?

When rhabdomyosarcoma is suspected, your child's doctor will perform imaging studies and a tissue biopsy to confirm the presence of cancer cells. A biopsy can also help determine what type of rhabdomyosarcoma a child has, which affects treatment decisions.

## How is it treated?

Because rhabdomyosarcoma is relatively rare, it is important for a child to be evaluated and treated in a multidisciplinary specialty clinic where experts can determine the best course of action. Depending on the type of rhabdomyosarcoma and how widespread the cancer is, treatment can include the following:

**Surgery** to completely remove the cancer is performed whenever possible. If the radiation therapy or tissue that needs to be removed during surgery.

**Radiation therapy** uses high-energy radiation to kill cancer cells or keep them from growing.

**Chemotherapy** uses **Hormone therapy** removes receptors), drugs, surgery, or radiation therapy is used to reduce the production of hormones or block them from working. estrogen) may be used to treat childhood soft tissue sarcoma.

### **What happens after treatment?**

Depending on the type of tumor a child has and whether it has spread (metastasized), a child may require regular follow-up visits to check for any recurrence of disease.

**See the next page for contact information.**

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