

Osteosarcoma is a form of cancer. It is a type of tumor that affects the bones. Osteosarcoma can affect people at any age, but is most common during the teen-aged years, and is the most common bone cancer affecting children and adolescents under the age of 20. The long bones of the legs, usually near where they connect to the knees, and the upper long bone of the arms, near where this bone meets the shoulders are the most common sites for osteosarcoma formation. Symptoms will vary depending upon the exact location and extent of disease. Pain is the most common symptom of osteosarcoma and there is often a mass or bump that can be felt (palpable). Eighty percent of individuals present with localized disease, which means the cancer remains in the area it first developed. Osteosarcoma can spread (metastasize) to other areas of the body, most likely the lungs. The exact cause is unknown in most individuals, but osteosarcoma can be induced by radiation. Most individuals are treated with a combination of chemotherapy and surgery. Sometimes, radiation therapy may be used. There are estimated to be about 750-1,000 new individuals diagnosed with osteosarcoma each year in the United States. About 450 of those are children or adolescents under the age of 20. Osteosarcoma is a rare disorder, but it is the most common cause of bone cancer in children and adolescents. These tumors usually affect individuals in their second decade of life (10-19 years of age), most often between 13 and 16 years of age, which most likely coincides with adolescent growth spurts. There is a second increase in the number of people with osteosarcoma in people over the age of 60. Overall, osteosarcoma accounts for about 1% of all cancers diagnosed each year in the United States. Osteosarcoma affect slightly more males than females and is slightly more common in African-Americans and Hispanics/Latinos than in Caucasians.