

Urachal cancer is a form of cancer that arises in a structure called the urachus. The urachus is a canal that exists when the fetus is developing before birth. This canal runs from the bladder of the fetus to the belly button (umbilicus). It drains the urinary bladder of the fetus. Between the fourth and fifth month of pregnancy, this canal breaks down (degenerates) into a fibrous band of tissue called a ligament. This ligament runs from the belly button to the top of the bladder and is called the median umbilical ligament. Sometimes, there are tissue remnants of the urachus in adults (about 1/3 of adults have urachal tissue remnants). This usually does not cause any problems. However, sometimes these remnants can potentially become cancerous (malignant). Urachal cancer will often extend into surrounding structures like the bladder, and can potentially spread (metastasize) to other areas of the body. The exact, underlying cause of urachal cancer is not fully understood. Surgery is the most common treatment option. Urachal cancer is a rare disorder. The exact prevalence and incidence of this form of cancer in the general population is unknown. Rare disorders often go misdiagnosed or undiagnosed making it difficult to determine their true frequency in the general population. Urachal cancer accounts for less than 1% of bladder cancers. Males and females are affected. Most people are in their 40-50s when diagnosed with the disorder.