

Leiomyosarcoma is a malignant (cancerous) tumor that arises from smooth muscle Cells. There are essentially two types of muscles in the body - voluntary and involuntary. Smooth muscles are involuntary muscles - the brain has no conscious control over them. Smooth muscles react involuntarily in response to various stimuli. For example, smooth muscle that lines the walls of the digestive tract causes wave-like contractions (peristalsis) that aid in the digestion and transport of food. Smooth muscles in the salivary glands cause the glands to squirt saliva into the mouth in response to taking a bite of food. Smooth muscle in the skin causes goose bumps to form in response to cold. Leiomyosarcomas affect both males and females. Leiomyosarcoma is a form of soft tissue sarcoma. According to the American Cancer Society, at least 15,000 new cases of soft tissue sarcoma occur each year in the U.S. Soft tissue sarcomas affect men and women equally and occur more often in adults than children or adolescents. Soft tissue sarcomas account for 1 percent of all adult cancers in the U.S. According to one estimate, leiomyosarcomas account for 7-11 percent of all cases of soft tissue sarcomas.