

Primary Bone Cancer: Symptoms



What are the symptoms of bone cancer?

Symptoms of cancer that start in the bones (primary bone cancer) usually develop slowly over time. The symptoms you or your child might have depend on the type and size of the tumor, as well as which bone it's affecting. Here are some common symptoms of primary bone cancer:

- **Pain.** Pain is the most common symptom of primary bone cancer. At first, you may not feel the pain all the time. It may be worse at night or when you use the bone, such as when you walk. As the cancer grows, the pain may become constant. Sometimes, primary bone cancer interferes with normal movements. Pain in your leg, for instance, may cause you to limp.
- **Swelling.** Sometimes, people have swelling in the area of the pain. It may or may not happen at the same time that the pain starts. Depending on where the tumor is, you may feel a lump or mass.
- **Fractures.** Primary bone cancer can weaken the bone. In some cases, the weakness can lead to a break in your bone. This is called a fracture. People often describe this as a sudden, intense pain in a limb that had been sore for months.
- **Other symptoms.** You might experience weight loss, fever, and fatigue, especially if the cancer spreads beyond your bone. The cancer can also affect other organs, leading to other symptoms. For instance, you might have trouble breathing if the cancer spreads to your lungs. Cancer in bones of the spine can affect nerves coming out of the spinal cord. This might cause numbness or weakness, especially in the lower body.

When to see your healthcare provider

Many of these symptoms can be caused by other, more common health problems. But it's important to see your healthcare provider if you have these symptoms. Only a healthcare provider can tell if you have bone cancer.

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