



## Heart Disease

Leiomyosarcoma of the inferior vena cava is an extremely rare malignant (cancerous) tumor arising from the smooth muscle lining the walls of the large vein that carries blood from the lower body to the heart (inferior vena cava). 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, the smooth muscle in walls of blood vessels contracts to help regulate blood flow.

Leiomyosarcomas are a form of cancer. The term "cancer" refers to a group of diseases characterized by abnormal, uncontrolled cellular growth that invades surrounding tissues and may spread (metastasize) to distant bodily tissues or organs via the bloodstream, the lymphatic system, or other means. Different forms of cancer, including leiomyosarcomas, are graded according to certain histological parameters evaluated microscopically and this grade (low, intermediate, or high) gives the clinician an indication of the potential clinical aggressiveness of the tumor.

Leiomyosarcoma is classified as a soft tissue sarcoma. Sarcomas are malignant tumors that arise from the connective tissue, which connects, supports and surrounds various structures and organs in the body. Soft tissue includes fat, muscle, nerve, tendons, tissue surrounding the joints (synovial tissue), and blood and lymph vessels. The exact cause of sarcomas including leiomyosarcomas is unknown.

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