

New Hope for Sarcoma Patients

What is sarcoma?

Soft tissue sarcomas are malignant tumors that can develop from fat, muscle, nerve, fibrous tissues surrounding joints, blood vessel, or deep skin tissue and can occur in almost any organ, including the lungs, heart, gastrointestinal tract, liver, kidney and the extremities. Several inherited genetic conditions can be risk factors for soft tissue sarcoma, as well as previous cancer treatment and specific environmental exposures. There are more than 50 distinct subtypes that can be distinguished on the molecular level. This makes us acutely aware of the need for personalized, molecularly based therapies to treat each patient's cancer type.

Improving Survival

In the United States, the five-year survival rate is 50 percent. Although our rate at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center is significantly higher, we are determined to find more effective new therapies. In the Sarcoma Research Center, we are developing strong research programs through an interactive laboratory.

We attack the problem of sarcoma at its most fundamental level, hoping to learn more about the molecular and genetic causes underlying sarcoma progression and its spread to different body regions.

What we learn in the laboratories we share with physicians, health care specialists and scientists around the world. Our common desire is to turn discoveries into more effective and easier-to-tolerate therapies for patients.





What can we accomplish together?

Perhaps because of its rarity—less than one percent of all adult tumors are sarcomas—it has not received the same level of attention and research funding as other more common forms of malignancy. As a result, fewer investigators have dedicated themselves to this research. In addition, few hospitals and cancer centers have the extensive multidisciplinary treatment and research programs needed to develop new therapies for this disease.

At M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, the infrastructure is in place for developing new and effective ways to personalize sarcoma treatment and risk evaluation. The sarcoma tumor bank, which has been collecting samples for more than 15 years, is a valuable resource for analysis that will tell us about molecular and genetic treatment potential. The unequaled resources, the breadth of patient care and the expertise of physicians and research scientists make the Sarcoma Research Center a logical place to invest in the future to help sarcoma patients.





Personalized Molecular Medicine

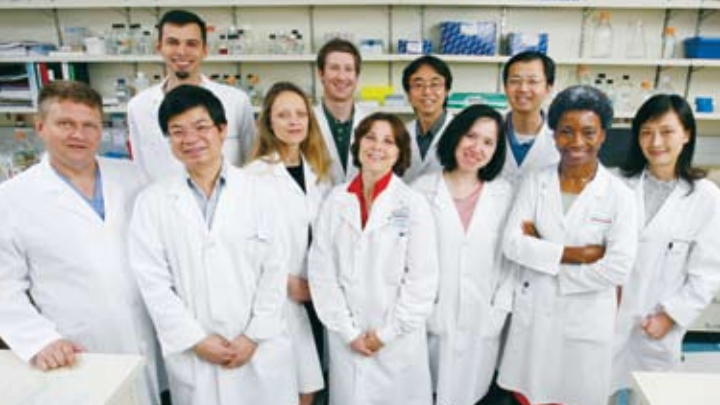
In the Sarcoma Research Center, collaborative investigations are already underway to develop new molecular-oriented diagnostic, tumor biology, and therapeutic approaches to the sarcoma cluster of malignant diseases.

For example, some gastrointestinal stromal tumors (GIST), a specific sarcoma subtype, can now be effectively treated with the molecular compound known as imatinib (Gleevec). Prior to imatinib there was no uniformly effective systemic treatment for this disease.



Physicians in the Sarcoma Center were central to the GIST success story. We are hopeful that this approach can be extended to other types of sarcoma, if appropriate funding for more investigation can be found.

The Sarcoma Research Laboratory within the center includes faculty from five different departments at M. D. Anderson along with shared research support personnel, equipment and facilities. You will find more information at www.mdanderson.org/diseases/softsarcoma.



A Partnership to Help Patients

Philanthropic support provides needed start-up funds for promising new research and educational programs and helps to build and equip patient care and research facilities.

Soft tissue sarcoma is an area of cancer research in which a single donor can make a world of difference. Your gift will have a significant impact for sarcoma patients at M. D. Anderson and throughout the world.

**For more information on making a donation,
please contact Diane Chuoke at
The University of Texas
M. D. Anderson Cancer Center Development Office
713-563-4077 or 800-525-5841 or see
www.mdanderson.org/gifts**

**For questions regarding the
Sarcoma Research Center Program please contact:
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