

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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MSK sarcoma surgeons like Sam Singer (left) and Sam Yoon are experienced at treating even the rarest sarcomas. They can control your disease while helping you maintain your quality of life.

Surgery is the primary treatment for soft tissue sarcoma. To make sure that the cancer does not return, it is important for surgeons to remove the entire tumor along with a small amount of healthy tissue around the tumor.

Soft tissue sarcoma can begin in many different parts of the body. The surgery that is right for you depends on the exact size and location of the tumor. For some people, surgery is all that is needed to cure the disease. Others may need [radiation, chemotherapy, or other drugs](#) before, during, or after the operation.

MSK surgeons have been pioneers in the treatment of soft tissue sarcoma. [We have treated more than 11,000 people with the disease since 1982.](#) Learn more about some of the specialized approaches used by MSK's highly experienced soft tissue sarcoma surgeons.

Minimally Invasive Surgery for Abdominal Sarcoma

A minimally invasive operation, such as laparoscopic or robotic surgery, may be an option for some people, especially those with [gastrointestinal stromal tumors \(GISTs\)](#). During a minimally invasive procedure, the doctor performs the same operation as in a traditional surgery but uses special tools that make several small incisions instead of one large one.

At Memorial Sloan Kettering, our soft tissue sarcoma surgeons are highly skilled in these techniques. We have a lot of experience in figuring out if such an approach might be right for you. The key consideration is always which technique is best for curing the cancer and giving you the best quality of life afterward. Although a minimally invasive approach can be a good option for many people, it is not right for everyone.

Limb-Sparing Surgery for Sarcoma in the Arms or Legs

Limb-sparing surgery is a treatment approach that allows people with soft tissue sarcoma in an arm or leg to avoid having the limb removed. Today, thanks to advances in treatment pioneered at MSK and other cancer centers, more than 95 percent of people with soft tissue sarcoma in an arm or leg do not need an amputation.

During a limb-sparing procedure, the surgeon removes the cancerous tissue, cartilage, and bone. Some people need radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or both to shrink the tumor before surgery. One of the advantages of coming to Memorial Sloan Kettering is that our surgeons know how to identify those patients who do not need more treatment other than surgery.

Plastic or Reconstructive Surgery for Sarcoma

Some people need plastic or reconstructive surgery to repair the area where the tumor was removed. This happens at the same time as the operation to remove the sarcoma.

Plastic or reconstructive surgery helps restore the body's cosmetic appearance or physical function. It can also be used to replace skin and reconnect nerves and blood vessels so that you can get back to looking — and moving — like your normal self. What surgery you need depends on where in the body the sarcoma is and how much tissue your surgeon has to remove.

At Memorial Sloan Kettering, our plastic and reconstructive surgeons use the most-sophisticated techniques to minimize the side effects of surgery and help speed your recovery.

Surgery for Recurrent or Metastatic Sarcoma

If the sarcoma returns after your first cancer operation, it may be possible to cure it with another operation. Another option is to combine surgery with chemotherapy and radiation therapy. At Memorial Sloan Kettering, we make these treatment decisions with you. The right treatment depends on the specific circumstances of the disease. Sometimes we recommend surgery for tumors that have spread to other parts of the body (metastatic sarcoma).

If you are unable to have surgery, your doctor may recommend chemotherapy. Another option might be to enroll in a [clinical trial that's testing a new treatment approach for soft tissue sarcoma](#). There are studies of therapies designed to target genetic mutations that have been discovered in tumors and immunotherapies that can stimulate your immune system to attack cancer.

Why choose Memorial Sloan Kettering for soft tissue sarcoma surgery?

As the world's largest nonprofit cancer center, we provide leading-edge surgery for soft tissue sarcoma. Few sarcoma teams are as experienced as ours at Memorial Sloan Kettering. Our full-time staff of soft tissue sarcoma surgeons has expertise in treating all subtypes of the disease. We perform around 600 soft tissue sarcoma operations each year. We are often able to remove tumors that are considered inoperable at other cancer centers.

Our soft tissue sarcoma surgeons are also leading researchers in the field. Working closely with our dedicated team of sarcoma pathologists, we have discovered that soft tissue sarcoma subtypes have different growth patterns and levels of risk for spreading. We have developed special [prediction tools](#) to help us understand how likely it is for a particular tumor to return or spread after surgery. The tools are called nomograms. With this information, we can build the most-effective plan for you before you begin treatment.

We closely monitor people who have a high risk of a soft tissue sarcoma coming back so that we can treat them earlier. This vigilance allows us to give our patients the best quality of life possible for as long as possible.

Choose Memorial Sloan Kettering because:

Our surgeons created ways to control soft tissue sarcoma tumors without removing limbs. Our techniques make it possible to do complex operations while preserving the function of nerves, blood vessels, and muscle.

Our entire team of soft tissue sarcoma doctors has vast knowledge of how different types of sarcoma grow and spread. [We have published our experience in the diagnosis and treatment of more than 10,000 people with soft tissue sarcoma.](#)

Our expertise allows us to personalize each care plan. We make sure that our patients receive just the right amount of treatment based on the unique characteristics of the tumor. This approach is called personalized medicine.

Our surgeons, medical oncologists, and radiation oncologists offer joint clinic hours so that people with soft tissue sarcoma can see multiple world-class doctors all on the same day.

Our specialists provide comprehensive [follow-up care after soft tissue sarcoma surgery](#). Services we offer include rehabilitation therapies to help recover strength, flexibility, and stamina. Emotional support is available at our [Counseling Center](#), and wellness therapies from [integrative medicine](#) specialists can help relieve emotional or physical symptoms.

Request an Appointment

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Available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Eastern time)

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