

Enchondroma

Enchondroma is a type of benign cartilage tumor appearing on the bones' inside. The tumors will often begin and continue to grow in childhood. They will stop growing and remain present throughout your adult life. Most of the time, they are found in patients who are between the ages of 10 and 20. Depending on the case, your condition might be burnt out or dormant.

Enchondroma Anatomy

These particular tumors are quite common and tend to appear in the small bones of the feet and hand. In truth, they are one of the most common of all tumors found in the hand. Depending on the situation, they can also occur in the long bones of the thigh and the upper arm. In rare instances, more than one tumor can appear as part of this syndrome.

Single enchondroma can end up being cancerous, but this is not common. Change rates for a cancerous tumor are slightly higher in Ollier's disease and Maffucci's syndrome. In those cases where the condition does turn cancerous, when they end up becoming malignant, they wind up turning into a chondrosarcoma. Being able to differentiate between benign tumors and the low-grade forms of cancerous tumors proves to be difficult, even for that of an orthopaedic tumor surgeon.



How to Treat Enchondromas:

1. Nonsurgical Treatment

Most of the time, these enchondromas don't require any treatment. When necessary, treatments can vary. This can cause debate, even amongst surgeons because of the difficulty in trying to determine the aggressiveness of the tumor. When they don't show any symptoms in the patient, you can monitor them with regular x-rays and make sure the tumor isn't getting any bigger. The majority of surgeons believe that tumors posing no symptoms don't need to be removed.

2. Surgical Treatment

When the enchondroma is treated with surgery, it often involves scraping out and filling in the cavity using a bone graft or other type of substance. Even though they can return, the majority of the time they won't. Tumors causing pathologic fractures are often treated by giving the fracture time to heal. The tumor is then scraped to alleviate the chance of another fracture occurring. Aggressive tumors that have a mass growing outside of the bone or causing destruction to the bone need to be removed.

Malignant tumors have to be scraped out or you may wind up having to have the entire bone that surrounds the tumor removed. Based on the grade of the tumor, the decision will be made accordingly. Imaging studies and a biopsy can help determine the tumor grade. Depending on the surgeon and the situation, your tumor can either be left alone or it will need to be scraped out.

Tips:

- Tumors normally appear in the feet and hands, but they can end up deforming the bone.
- The enchondroma is often painless.
- Symptoms include deformities, enlarged fingers and pathologic fractures.
- Pain waking you up during the night could be the sign of a malignant tumor.
- Pain is often common with shoulder conditions like rotator cuff tendonitis, so it needs to be determined what you are dealing with to assess treatment options.
- Further investigation is always recommended, and X-rays and MRI scans can be very useful to accurately diagnose the condition.