

Patient Information about Brain Cancer

<http://www.oncologychannel.com/patient-information-brain-cancer/index.shtml>

Brain cancer is generally classified in two categories. Primary brain cancer occurs when a tumor originates in the brain. Secondary (metastatic) brain cancer happens when cancer cells from another part of the body spread to the brain and form a tumor.

Brain tumors vary widely in their location, types of cells affected, and severity. Some are caused by a genetic mutation that keeps the body from suppressing malignant cells. Exposure to vinyl chloride has also been linked to brain cancer. Melanoma and cancers of the breast, lung, and colon can cause secondary brain tumors.

Common symptoms of brain cancer include nausea, vomiting, and headaches. Depending on where the tumor is located, patients may also experience seizures, vision and/or hearing loss, reduced cognitive abilities, paralysis, and other symptoms. Treatment usually involves surgery, radiation therapy, and/or chemotherapy.

Here are some questions to ask your doctor about brain cancer. **Print this page**, check off the questions that concern you, and take it with you to your appointment. Being informed about brain cancer can help you to better understand your condition, your treatment options, and the support that is available to you.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Brain Cancer Diagnosis

- Why do you suspect that I have this type of cancer?
- Which diagnostic tests will be performed?
- How should I prepare for these tests?
- Can you explain the stereotactic biopsy procedure?
- How long will I be in the hospital following this procedure?
- What can I expect the recovery period to be like?
- What steps are taken to prevent blood clot, hemorrhage, and/or infection during and after stereotactic biopsy?
- When will the results of the biopsy be available? **Date:**
- Who will explain these results to me?

- Where is my tumor located?
- Is it a primary or secondary tumor?
- What stage of brain cancer describes my tumor?
- Is the tumor large? How fast are the tumor cells growing?
- Who are the members of my oncology team? What are their roles?
- How do I contact the members of my health care team? **Telephone numbers:**

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Brain Cancer Treatment

- What are my treatment options?
- What course of treatment do you recommend? Why do you recommend this treatment?
- What are the benefits, risks, and possible complications of this brain cancer treatment?
- Should I get a second or third opinion before starting treatment?
- How will treatment affect my daily life?
- Am I a candidate for surgery? Why or why not?
- What tests will I need to have before brain cancer surgery? What do these tests involve?
- How do I prepare for these tests and/or for my surgery?
- If pre-surgery tests detect signs of hypertension or diabetes, what will happen next?
- Can the entire brain tumor be removed surgically?
- How long will I be in the hospital after surgery?
- What are the possible complications of this type of surgery?

How frequently do complications like bleeding, infection, or brain tissue damage occur?

What medications will I need to take after the procedure

What are the common side effects associated with these medications?

What might my recovery from surgery be like? What will my limitations be?

Restrictions:

Will I be able to return to work? Drive a car?

Will I need home care after surgery and/or during other brain cancer treatments?

Will I need radiation therapy? If so, what kind?

What does brachytherapy involve?

Will large or small doses of radiation be administered?

How often and where will I receive radiation treatments?

What are the risks and side effects of radiation therapy?

How might I feel during and after radiation therapy?

Should I be concerned about radiation complications?

Might radiation affect my cognitive ability and/or other brain functions?

How might radiation therapy affect my pituitary gland?

Might I need chemotherapy? Why or why not?

If my child who has brain cancer is still growing and developing, might chemotherapy be a better option than other treatments?

If brain cancer surgery, radiation therapy, and/or chemotherapy are not successful, what other treatment options are available?

- Are there any experimental treatments that might be beneficial?
 - Do you recommend that I participate in a brain cancer clinical trial? Why or why not?
 - Will I need rehabilitation after treatment for brain cancer? If so, how do I locate these services?
 - Where can I learn more about my brain cancer? Can you recommend any books or websites?
 - Are there any local support groups available to me?
 - Are there any online or local support services available to my family and caregivers?
 - Can you explain hospice to me?
 - Next appointment:**
Doctor: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____
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Notes/Additional Information