



*"Every patient carries her or his own doctor inside." - Albert Schweitzer*

**Brain Tumor Awareness Month is an opportunity for us to come together as a community and spotlight the tributes and triumphs of all of those impacted by a brain tumor diagnosis and the need for greater understanding of the disease and safer, more effective treatments.**

## **Brain tumor**

A brain tumor is a mass or growth of abnormal cells in your brain.

Many different types of brain tumors exist. Some brain tumors are non-cancerous (benign), and some brain tumors are cancerous (malignant). Brain tumors can begin in your brain (primary brain tumors), or cancer can begin in other parts of your body and spread to your brain (secondary, or metastatic brain tumors).

**A metastatic brain tumor is cancer that starts in another part of the body and spreads to the brain.**

**A primary brain tumor is a group (mass) of abnormal cells that starts in the brain.**

### **Causes:**

The cause of primary brain tumors is unknown. There are many risk factors that could play a role:

- ✿ Radiation therapy used to treat brain cancers increases the risk of brain tumors up to 20 or 30 years later.
- ✿ Some inherited conditions increase the risk of brain tumors, including neurofibromatosis, Von Hippel-Lindau syndrome, Li-Fraumeni syndrome, and Turcot syndrome.
- ✿ Lymphomas that begin in the brain in people with a weakened immune system are sometimes linked to infection by the Epstein-Barr virus.
- ✿ Exposure to radiation at work or to power lines, as well as head injuries, smoking, and hormone therapy have not been proven to be risk factors.
- ✿ Studies have found that cell phones, cordless phones, and wireless devices are safe and do not increase the risk.

### **Symptoms:**

Symptoms may include any of the following:

- ✿ Decreased coordination, clumsiness, falls.
- ✿ Fever.
- ✿ General ill feeling or lethargy.

- 🚫 Headache - new or more severe than usual, changed pattern of headaches.
- 🚫 Confusion, memory loss, poor judgment or difficulty solving problems.
- 🚫 Numbness, tingling, pain, and other changes in sensation.
- 🚫 Rapid emotional changes or strange behaviors.
- 🚫 Seizures which are new.
- 🚫 Speech difficulties.
- 🚫 Vomiting -- with or without nausea.
- 🚫 Weakness of a body area.
- 🚫 Headaches which are worse when waking up in the morning and go away within a few hours.
- 🚫 Headaches which get worse with coughing or exercise, or with a change in body position.
- 🚫 Headaches which occur while sleeping and with at least one other symptom such as vomiting or confusion.
- 🚫 Changes in personality and behavior.
- 🚫 Unable to concentrate.
- 🚫 Increased sleep.
- 🚫 Problems with reasoning.
- 🚫 Gradual loss of movement or sensation in an arm or leg.
- 🚫 Hearing loss with or without dizziness.
- 🚫 Unexpected vision problem (especially if it occurs with a headache), including vision loss (usually of peripheral vision) in one or both eyes, or double vision or decreased vision.
- 🚫 Problems with balance.
- 🚫 Changes in the person's mental function.
- 🚫 Change in alertness (including sleepiness, unconsciousness, and coma).
- 🚫 Changes in hearing, taste, or smell.
- 🚫 Changes that affect touch and the ability to feel pain, pressure, different temperatures, or other stimuli.
- 🚫 Difficulty swallowing.
- 🚫 Difficulty writing or reading.
- 🚫 Dizziness or abnormal sensation of movement (vertigo).
- 🚫 Eye problems such as eyelid drooping, pupils of different sizes or uncontrollable eye movement.
- 🚫 Hand tremor.
- 🚫 Lack of control over the bladder or bowels.
- 🚫 Muscle weakness in the face, arm, or leg (usually on one side only).

## When to Contact a Medical Professional?

Call your health care provider if you develop a persistent headache that is new or different for you, or if one or more of the above symptoms develop suddenly or gradually.

## Coping and support:

Consider trying to:

- 🚫 Learn enough about brain tumors to make decisions about your personal care.
- 🚫 Keep friends and family close.
- 🚫 Find someone to talk with for support.

## Reference Links:

- 🚫 <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000769.htm>
- 🚫 <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000768.htm>
- 🚫 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0004485/>
- 🚫 <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/brain-tumor/basics/coping-support/con-20028592>
- 🚫 <http://www.abta.org/get-involved/brain-tumor-awareness-month.html>

**For any enquiry or assistance please contact:** [wellness@medicaretpa.co.in](mailto:wellness@medicaretpa.co.in)

**Disclaimer:** No information contained here should be relied on in making health decisions. Always check with your doctor or other health care provider.