

# Brain Tumors in Children: A Commentary

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Pediatric brain tumors are masses or growths of abnormal cells that occur in a child's brain or the tissue and structures that are near it. Many different types of pediatric brain tumors exist-some are noncancerous (benign) and some are cancerous (malignant). When brain cells grow abnormally or out of control, a tumor (a mass of cells) can form. If the tumor puts pressure on certain areas of the brain, it can affect how the body functions. When discovered early enough, brain tumors are usually treatable. Many that are slow-growing are cured with surgery alone. Other types that are faster-growing might need additional treatment with radiation therapy or chemotherapy, or both. There are many different types of brain tumors [1]. Some are cancerous (meaning they can spread to parts of the body outside the brain), and others aren't. Doctors categorize a tumor based on its location, the type of cells involved, and how quickly it grows.

Treatment and chance of recovery (prognosis) depend on the type of tumor, its location within the brain, whether it has spread, and your child's age and general health. Because new treatments and technologies are continually being developed, several options may be available at different points in treatment. Treatment for brain tumors in children is typically quite different from treatment for adult brain tumors, so it's very important to enlist the expertise and experience of Pediatric specialists in neurology and cancer.

Some signs and symptoms may not be easy to detect because they're similar to symptoms of other conditions. Some of the more common symptoms of a brain tumor in children include: Feeling of increased pressure in the head; Headaches, which may become more frequent and more severe; abrupt onset of vision problems, such double vision; unexplained nausea or vomiting.

Signs or symptoms vary depending on a child's age and the location of the tumor, but may include: Vomiting; Seizures; weakness of the face, trunk, arms, or legs slurred speech; difficulty standing or walking; poor coordination; headache; in babies and young toddlers, a rapidly enlarging head; In most cases, the exact cause of a Pediatric brain tumor is not known. Pediatric brain tumors typically are primary brain tumors i.e. tumors that start in the brain or in tissues close to it [2]. The result is a mass of abnormal cells, which forms a tumor. Many different types of brain tumors-which may or may not be cancerous-can, occur in children.

In most children with primary brain tumors, the cause of the tumor isn't clear. But certain types of brain tumors, such as medulloblastoma or ependymoma, are more common in children. Though uncommon, a family history of brain tumors or a family history of genetic syndromes may increase the risk of brain tumors in some children. Primary brain tumors begin when normal cells have errors (mutations) in their DNA. These mutations allow cells to grow and divide at increased rates and to continue living when healthy cells would die.

Pediatric neurosurgeons are having more success than ever helping cure children with brain tumors [3]. This is partly because of new technologies in the operating room and partly because an aggressive surgical approach at diagnosis can greatly increase the chance for a cure.

## References

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