

Brain Tumor Symptoms

Several factors influence the type of symptoms a brain tumor may cause including the size and location of the tumor and the speed it is growing. Most commonly, symptoms progress over a small number of days or weeks. However, symptoms can take much longer to develop. Other times they can come on suddenly. Not uncommonly, patients and their caregivers are concerned they are having a stroke given the similarity of the symptoms.

Common symptoms of tumors include:

- Weakness on one side of the body
- Changes in speech
- Difficulty verbalizing common words
- Changes or loss of vision
- Changes in behavior or personality
- Seizures
- Headaches
- Balance problems
- Confusion
- Fatigue

Treatment of the tumor may improve the symptoms a patient is experiencing. Some symptoms, however, may be permanent. There are things we can do to help your symptoms:

- **Corticosteroids** (dexamethasone, Decadron) are medications used to decrease the swelling around the tumor. They reduce the pressure that the tumor is placing on the brain. Ideally we want to use the lowest possible dosage.
- **Anticonvulsants** are medicines used to prevent seizures. We generally only use these medicines for patients who have had a seizure.
- Pain medications are used to treat headaches and other pains.
- Occupational and Physical therapy are prescribed to patients with certain physical problems to help them recover.
- Speech and Occupational therapy are prescribed to patients with cognitive, speech or language problems.

Over the course of one's illness, symptoms may fluctuate. It is important that patients and caregivers are attentive to the symptoms they are experiencing and to bring changes to the attention of your treatment team.