



Brain Tumour Australia Information

© FACT SHEET 1

The Brain—Your Diagnosis

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The brain controls everything we do.

It coordinates all movements such as walking sitting, eating and sleeping. Functions such as talking, thinking, laughing, crying are also coordinated by the brain. Doing these things at appropriate times is one of the major responsibilities of the brain. All the senses experienced by a human-being; seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling and feeling are tasks managed by the brain. Therefore, when a cancer diagnosis and any subsequent treatments affect such an important part of the body, it is natural that changes may occur.

Depending on where (which lobe of the brain) the tumour is situated, the diagnosed person may lack insight into changes that have occurred or are occurring. Sometimes these changes are noticed by family and friends but unnoticed by the person affected by the tumour. This can make it difficult for families to cope. This lack of awareness on the part of the diagnosed person can make the experience of daily living difficult, especially for the support network of family and friends. Problems with memory, behaviour, moods and cognitive function all impact on relationships and lives.

When a diagnosis of a brain (cerebral) tumour is received, both the person with the diagnosis and family, friends, work colleagues and people close to them experience disbelief and shock. The need to protect, and to normalise become paramount.

If the diagnosis is that of a primary brain tumour, there may have been no previous experience with any other serious illness prior to this finding. However if the tumour is a secondary diagnosis, resulting from a previous diagnosis of a cancer elsewhere in the body, the person with the diagnosis and family may still experience the same shock and disbelief. The diagnosis/prognosis and treatment can have a profound impact on an individual's life for a considerable period.

Understandably, this is an emotional period. Changes in daily routines and responsibilities may be necessary, and these changes will be easier if the situation is understood and options are explained. With this information one can feel more comfortable and more in control.

Being diagnosed with a brain tumour can have an enormous impact on the patient and their support network.

- Read the [Impact](#) page for strategies about the issues that may be encountered
- Read the [What To Do](#) page for suggestions when facing the diagnosis.
- Consult the [Communication with your Health Professional](#) for guidelines
- Consult [Health Professionals](#) for an overview of the various people you may encounter.
- Information about seeking [Second Opinions & Choices](#)

Links to Brain Tumour Information Sites

The following pages provide links to various national and international sites which may have relevance to those travelling the brain tumour journey. OzBT.net.au. does not endorse or recommend any treatment, product or service advice that may be offered, the links are provided for convenience only. Some of the following fact sheets or books are available to download as a PDF file.

Brain Tumour Organizations

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| USA | Al Musella's Virtual Trials | http://www.virtualtrials.com/ |
| USA | American Brain Tumor Association | http://www.abta.org/ |
| USA | Children's Brain Tumor Foundation | http://www.cbtf.org/ |
| USA | National Brain Tumor Foundation | http://www.brainumor.org/ |
| USA | National Cancer Institute (USA) | http://www.cancer.gov/ |
| USA | Sloan Kettering Memorial Hospital - For information of Integrative medicine (Alternative/Complementary therapies) | http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/1979.cfm |
| Canada | Brain Tumor Foundation of Canada | http://www.btfc.org/brainumour.nsf/eng/home |
| Canada | North American Brain Tumor Coalition (NABTC) | http://www.nabrainumour.org/ |
| UK | Backup | http://www.macmillan.org.uk/Home.aspx |