

Emergency guide – brain and spinal tumours

This is a guide to the tumour-related signs and symptoms that you/your child may experience that require immediate action. Please remember this is only a guide. Other signs and symptoms not mentioned here should be discussed with your local team or The Royal Marsden advice telephone lines.

Brain/spinal tumour type.....

Signs and symptoms	Action/contacts
<p>Raised intracranial pressure</p> <p>All children and young people receiving treatment for a brain tumour are at risk of developing increased pressure within the brain.</p> <p>Symptoms include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sudden onset or severe headaches - Becoming disorientated, confused, excessively tired or less alert/responsive - Persistent headaches occurring on most days usually accompanied by vomiting and often waking up at night or occurring when they first wake up - Sudden change in vision, eg. blurred vision, new squint. 	<p>Urgent medical attention is needed.</p> <p>Attend your shared care hospital or nearest Emergency department.</p>
<p>Spinal cord compression</p> <p>You/your child may experience new onset of back pain without an explanation (eg. a fall, trauma), altered sensation, or weakness in any of your/their limbs and/or a loss of bladder and bowel control.</p>	<p>Urgent medical attention is needed.</p> <p>Contact your local hospital or the 24 hour advice line at The Royal Marsden as soon as possible.</p>



<p>One or more of these symptoms may be experienced.</p>	
<p>Seizures / major convulsion</p> <p>Symptoms include -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crying out, stiffening and falling to the ground - Arms and legs may jerk and may go blue in the face. <p>If a convulsion seizure lasts for more than 5 minutes, or if one seizure follows another without recovery in between.</p>	<p>Protect your child from injury. Remove objects that may cause harm. Place a cushion under their head if possible.</p> <p>Position on their side in the recovery position as soon as the seizure passes.</p> <p>Call 999 for an ambulance and get immediate help.</p>
<p>Focal seizures (also known as absence seizures)</p> <p>Symptoms may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jerking movements, odd sensations, feeling afraid or anxious or dazed and confused - Visual changes such as double vision - Persistent headache (in the absence of any additional signs of raised intracranial pressure) - Changes in mobility, such as falling over, worsening balance - Any new weakness in arms or legs - Any change in continence (control of urine and faeces) - Personality changes - Changes in speech. 	<p>Contact The Royal Marsden 24 hour advice line as soon as possible</p>
<p>Temperature / unwell</p> <p>It is very important to respond quickly to any temperature over 38C.</p> <p>This is also called sepsis and can be life threatening.</p> <p>It can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cold hands and feet - Mottled skin - Shivering 	<p>Contact your local shared care hospital or go to the nearest Emergency department if you do not have a shared care hospital.</p> <p>If your child could be neutropenic (neutrophils less than 0.5) treat this as an emergency and attend your shared care hospital or nearest Emergency department.</p> <p>You can call The Royal Marsden 24 hour advice line for immediate advice.</p>



Please be aware of the non-verbal signs/behaviour such as sleepiness and lethargy or you may feel that you/your child is 'just not right'. It is very important to get a medical assessment as early as possible.

Avoid giving paracetamol (do not use Ibuprofen) until seen and assessed.

Contact details

If you are under the paediatric team, you should contact the 24 hour telephone advice line:
0208 915 6248

If you are under the Young Adult Neuro oncology team, you should contact

The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline: **020 8915 6899**

Both services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Date discussed _____ by staff member _____

