

*The* ROYAL MARSDEN

NHS Foundation Trust

---

# Psychological effects of brain tumours

---

**Neurooncology Unit**

**Patient Information**

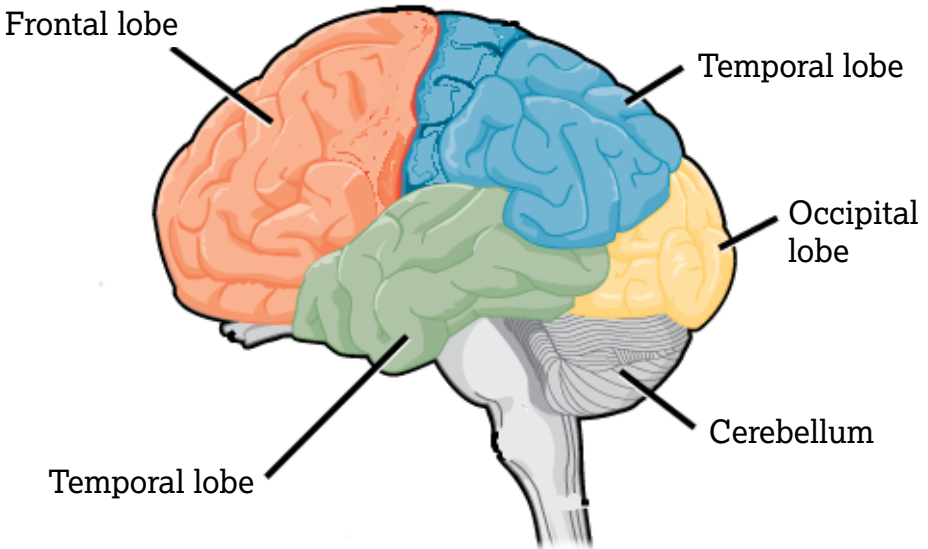


**NHS**



## Introduction

The brain is split into five lobes and each lobe is responsible for different functions.

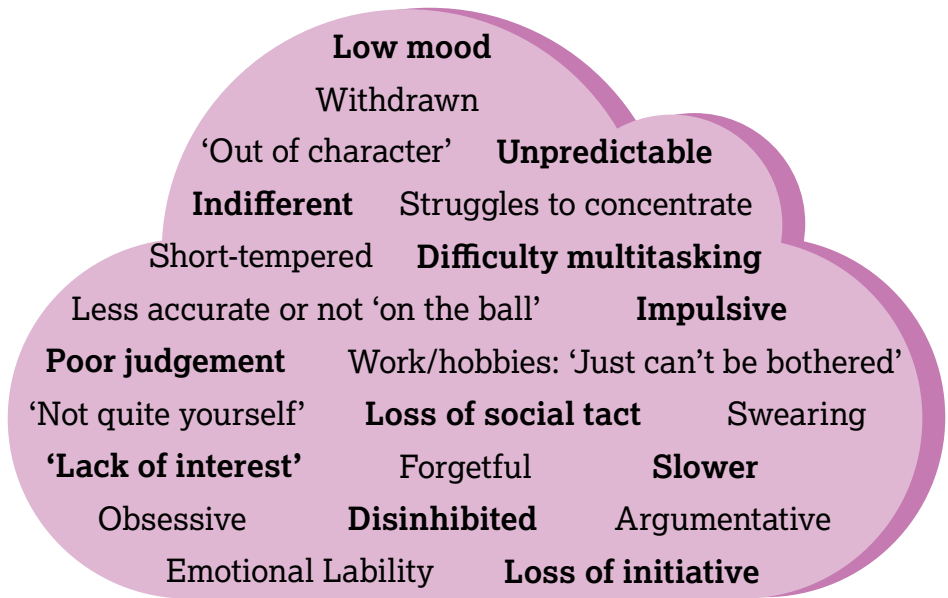


The **frontal lobe** is involved with thought process, memory and behaviour.

A tumour in the frontal lobe may result in a range of behavioural changes. Some changes can be subtle, such as an exaggeration of your personality traits. Other changes can be extreme, such as your behaviour being completely out of character.

You may not be aware of the changes – they are usually most noticeable to family and friends.

The changes can be described in different ways. The image on page 2 shows the most common traits:



These changes can sometimes be difficult to identify, address and deal with. Some of the behavioural traits are outlined in further detail below:

### **Disinhibited behaviour**

Examples of disinhibited behaviour include being unpredictable, argumentative, behaving 'out of character', loss of social tact, swearing, displaying inappropriate emotions eg laughing in a serious situation and making inappropriate sexual comments or advances.

### **Irritability, frustration, and aggression**

You may become easily irritated and intolerant of others. You may be short tempered and have difficulty controlling your anger or aggression. This coupled with disinhibition (described above), can result in outbursts of verbal and even physical aggression.

### **Apathy and disinterest**

You may become passive and lack motivation in your usual interests, hobbies or self-care. Your family and friends may notice a loss of interest, and describe you as indifferent,

withdrawn, or slower. You can either be aware or unaware of this change in yourself.

### **Difficulty with thought process**

You may begin to struggle with tasks that you would usually find easy eg finances or organising appointments. You may struggle with multitasking and may find it difficult to concentrate.

### **What can be done to help?**

These symptoms can be difficult for you and your family to deal with. It can be helpful to remember that they are as a result of the tumour and are not your fault. You may find it hard to talk about the psychological effects with your healthcare team and loved ones. However, it is important to try to identify these symptoms early on in your treatment, so that they can be addressed, and we can try to arrange appropriate support.

Whilst it may not be possible to stop your particular symptoms, there may be ways to help manage them. This includes Occupational Therapy support, Psychological Support, and Counselling, all available at The Royal Marsden. The neuro-oncology team at The Royal Marsden will be able to refer you to these services.

### **Further information and support**

#### **Neuro oncology clinical nurse specialist team at The Royal Marsden**

Email: [neurooncology@rmh.nhs.uk](mailto:neurooncology@rmh.nhs.uk)

Tel: 020 8915 6011

They can be contacted Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm for advice and support if needed. They are often the best first point of contact.

**The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline: 020 8915 6899**  
(available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

**Headway** – The brain injury association

*www.headway.org.uk/about-brain-injury/individuals/types-of-brain-injury/brain-tumour/*

They provide further information on the possible symptoms patients may experience, information for family and friends and signposting to local support groups.

**Macmillan Cancer Support**

*www.macmillan.org.uk*

Macmillan provides further information and support for patients diagnosed with brain tumours and their families/friends.

**The Brain Tumour Charity**

*www.thebraintumourcharity.org/living-with-a-brain-tumour/side-effects/personality-changes/coping-personality-changes/*

This charity provides information on diagnosis and treatment, support on living with a brain tumour and has over 300 support groups across the UK.

**BrainsTrust**

*www.brainstrust.org.uk/*

BrainsTrust offers information on brain tumours including practical help and support videos. It also has an online resource specifically on behaviour and personality changes.

**Brain Tumour Support**

*www.braintumoursupport.co.uk*

This charity provides specialist support to people with brain tumours as well as their caregivers. They host group sessions and social events, offer a counselling service, and have a Facebook forum to share experiences.

## **Maggie's Centre at The Royal Marsden**

*[www.maggies.org/our-centres/maggies-at-the-royal-marsden/](http://www.maggies.org/our-centres/maggies-at-the-royal-marsden/)*

Email: [maggies.royalmarsden@maggies.org](mailto:maggies.royalmarsden@maggies.org)

Tel: 020 3982 3141

Maggie's is a charity based on site at The Royal Marsden, Sutton. The centre provides support for people diagnosed with cancer, and their friends and family.

Due to some of the behavioural changes that can be caused by brain tumours, we've included information for domestic abuse charities below:

### **Women's Aid**

*[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)*

Information on how to access local support and practical help.

### **Refuge**

*[www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)*

24 hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline:  
0808 2000 247

Support and advice exclusively from highly trained female advisors.

### **Respect – Men's advice line**

Helpline for male victims of domestic abuse:  
0808 8010 327

An information hub signposting to local services, legal guidance and specialised support.

### **Samaritans**

24/7 Helpline:  
116 123

Volunteers listen in confidence and provide support.

## Notes and questions



## Notes and questions

## Notes and questions

## References

This booklet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this booklet are available on request from:

The Royal Marsden Help Centre

Telephone: Chelsea 020 7811 8438 / 020 7808 2083

Sutton 020 8661 3759 / 3951

Email: [patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk](mailto:patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk)

No conflicts of interest were declared in the production of this booklet.

Should you require information in an alternative format, please contact The Royal Marsden Help Centre.

The patient information service is generously supported by The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.

[royalmarsden.org](http://royalmarsden.org)

Registered Charity No.1095197



Published March 2024. Planned review March 2027  
© The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust NO-1798-01



Radiotherapy and  
Chemotherapy Services  
F538021 & F538022

