

# Possible effects of brain tumours and their treatment *for adults*

## Cognitive

### Difficulties with:

Attention/concentration	Communication (speech; understanding language/instructions; reading social cues)	Processing speed/problem-solving
Memory	Reasoning	Planning
Learning		Visual-spatial awareness

## Seizures

This can range from feeling a bit strange or absent, through making strange movements and sounds, to a convulsive seizure

## Auditory

Deafness Partial hearing loss Sensitivity to sound

## Taste, appetite and digestion

Nausea or vomiting	Changes in taste/appetite
Sore mouth	Bowel and bladder problems (incontinence/double incontinence)
Diarrhoea	
Constipation	
Heartburn	

## Changes in appearance

Hair loss	Ommaya reservoir or shunt (device for removing excess fluid in the brain - visible bump on the head)
Scars	For younger people or for those who have had a brain tumour in childhood:
Weight gain or loss	Slow growth/short stature
Puffiness of the face	Delayed puberty
Water retention in hands and feet	
Central/PICC lines/portacath (tubes for delivering chemotherapy drugs that stay in place during course of treatment)	

## Hydrocephalus

(build-up of fluid in the brain)

### Leading to:

Headaches Blurred vision  
Being sick Difficulty walking

## Visual

Blindness/partial sight	Unco-ordinated eye movements
Cataracts	Other visual defects, e.g. blind spots
Double vision	

## Skin

Rashes	Increased sensitivity to sunlight
Changes in colour	Bruising
Skin thinning	

## Fine motor control

### Difficulties with:

Writing  
Getting dressed

## Mobility

### Difficulties with:

Walking	Muscle wasting and cramps
Climbing stairs	Use of wheelchair or walking aids
Co-ordination	
Balance	

## Nerve damage

### Leading to:

Pain in extremities in cold weather	Difficulty making facial expressions
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

## General effects:

### Fatigue

Extreme tiredness (physical and mental), drowsiness, lethargy, sleep disturbance, somnolence syndrome (excessive drowsiness that can occur 4-6 weeks after radiotherapy).

### Behavioural effects

Personality changes, anger, irritability, impatience, anti-social behaviour, impulsiveness, heightened or inhibited sexual behaviour.

### Lowered immunity

Increased risk of infections, more severe forms of common illnesses.

### Practical effects

Loss of driving licence, financial difficulties.

### Endocrine changes

#### Leading to:

Tiredness, weight gain, depression, growth impairment, sensitivity to cold, feeling thirsty, needing to go to the toilet more often, diabetes, infertility, erectile dysfunction.

### Emotional effects

Loss of self-confidence, loss of independence, low self-esteem, feelings of social isolation, anxiety and 'scanxiety' (anxiety about scan results), depression, fear of tumour recurring, feeling of having to be the strong one for family and friends, fear of dying. (Effect on family members/friends/colleagues).

*Every person is different and will experience different side-effects.*

There are over 150 types of brain tumours

The side-effects will depend on the type and location of the tumour, the treatment received and the individual response.

One person will not have all these side-effects.

Some will be short-term; others may be long-term or delayed.

