

MY FRIEND HAS A BRAIN TUMOUR...

What is a brain tumour?

A brain tumour is a group of abnormal cells, which grow inside the brain. As the collection of cells continues to grow, the tumour gets bigger and can start to squash various areas of the brain, stopping them from working properly.

Are they going to die?

This is a particularly sensitive question. Your answer will depend on the young person's individual circumstances and what they/their family are prepared to share, as well as the age etc. of your class. But it's something you, as the teacher, may want to think about ahead of time, to be prepared if the question comes.

Will my friend be different?

Because of the tumour, or the treatment your friend has had to have, they might be a bit different.

They might look different, e.g. have lost their hair or have a scar, but this isn't always the case. Sometimes your friend might look exactly the same. They might have trouble moving or talking or might not remember things as well as they did before.

Will they still be able to play with us?

The treatment of brain tumours can lead to lots of tiredness, so your friend might not always be able to play with you, but it's always an idea to check with your friend first, as you don't want them feeling left out!



Is it cancer?

Not all brain tumours are cancer.

Some brain tumours are low grade (sometimes known as benign), which means it's not cancer. Some brain tumours are high grade (sometimes known as malignant), which means it is cancerous.

Is it their fault?

No, brain tumours are nobody's fault. Unfortunately, very often the answer is that we just don't know why people get brain tumours.

Could I catch it?

No. Brain tumours are not contagious. They're very different to a cold or a stomach bug and you can't catch it from somebody else.

Will the tumour come back?

If the young person has had the tumour removed, there is sometimes a chance the tumour can come back. Sometimes, young people need scans to check that it hasn't grown back - these can be really scary times, so make sure you check that your friend is okay!