

Spinal Tumor

Spinal tumors are either cancerous or noncancerous growths that develop within or close to the spinal cord or the bones that make up the spine. Even though pain in the back is often the most common symptom of these tumors, it is also a common problem in those who don't have a tumor. Most of the time, pain in the back isn't caused by a tumor and that makes this difficult to diagnose.

Spinal tumors or growths of any sort can affect the nerves near the tumor, which leads to pain, a host of neurological problems and even paralysis. Regardless of whether it is cancerous or not, spinal tumors are very serious and can cause permanent disability.

How to Diagnose a Spinal Tumour

Spinal tumours are very hard to diagnose, as they mimic mechanical back pain. They can also compress a nerve, so can cause sciatica. However sciatica is very common and tumours are very rare, making the tumour difficult to spot.

Often a patient who has a spinal tumour will complain of unrelenting pain, or night pain that may wake them up for no reason. They will also be unresponsive to physiotherapy or manual therapy. An MRI scan may be used to help diagnose the cause of the back or leg pain, and sadly in some cases this may show a tumour.

Spinal pain that is not resolving with conventional treatment might be sent to a consultant or for an MRI scan. The MRI scan will see a spinal tumour.

How to Treat a Spinal Tumor:

1. Monitoring

Some tumors might be identified before they ever begin causing symptoms. They are often found when you are being evaluated for a different condition. If the tumor is small and noncancerous and it isn't growing or placing a lot of pressure on the surrounding tissues, you might need to do nothing more than watch the tumor. This is definitely true in older individuals when radiation therapy or surgery might pose a risk.

2. Surgery

Tumors that can be removed with a minimal amount of nerve damage often are done so using surgery. Newer techniques allow the neurosurgeon to get to the tumors that were once inaccessible. Sound waves can also be used to help break up the tumor and remove fragments. Even with all of the surgical advancements, not all tumors are able to be removed entirely.

3. Radiation Therapy

This is often used after an operation to help eliminate any tumor remnants that cannot be removed completely or to treat any inoperable tumors. It is also the first line of treatment for metastatic tumors. Radiation is also used to relieve pain when surgery isn't an option.

Tips:

- Some individuals have found relief from acupuncture. Tiny needles are placed into your skin at specific points to help relieve pain.
- Make sure and ask a friend or family member to go with you to your appointment to make sure you don't miss out on any relevant information regarding treatment.
- Consume a diet packed with vegetables, fruits and whole grains.
- Make sure you are getting an adequate amount of rest.