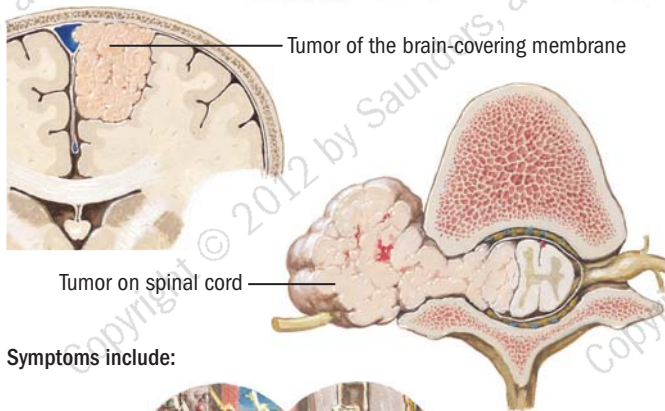


MANAGING YOUR MENINGIOMA

Meningiomas are slow-growing tumors in membranes covering the surface of the brain, spinal cord, or spinal nerve root. Almost all are benign, but they still cause problems by pressing on the brain or spinal cord. Meningiomas occur more often in women than in men, usually after age 40.



Symptoms include:

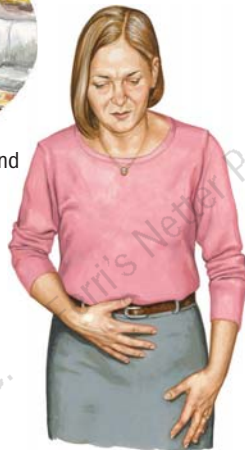
Vision and hearing changes



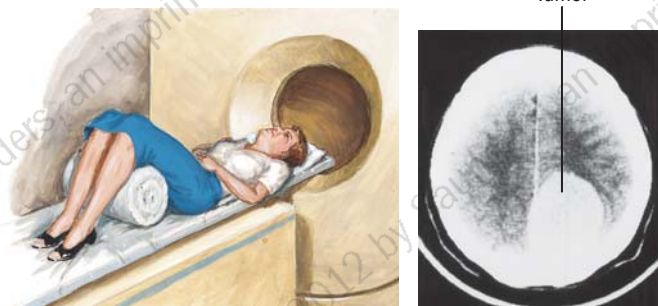
Nausea and vomiting



Headache



Your doctor may think that you have a meningioma from your medical history and physical examination. CT (shown here) or MRI of the brain, and maybe angiography will be done to find the tumor.



What Is a Meningioma?

Meningiomas are slow-growing tumors in membranes (meninges) that cover the surface of the brain, spinal cord, or spinal nerve root. About one-fifth of all brain tumors are meningiomas. Almost all meningiomas are benign (not cancerous), but they still cause problems because they press on the brain or spinal cord. Meningiomas occur nearly twice as often in women as in men, the most common age at time of diagnosis being 45. They are rare in children and adolescents. About 80% of people are cured if the tumor can be completely removed. Rarely, meningiomas are cancerous (malignant) and may recur quickly and destroy normal tissues nearby.

What Causes a Meningioma?

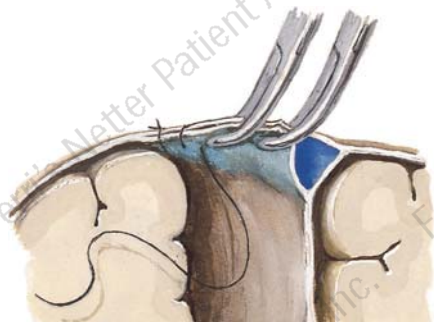
Meningiomas are caused by abnormal growth of cells on surface coverings of the brain, spinal cord, or spinal nerve roots. The cause of the abnormal growth is unknown.

What Are the Symptoms of a Meningioma?

Symptoms include headaches, vision changes, hearing changes, nausea and vomiting, weakness (especially on one side of the body), numbness or tingling, and loss of memory and the ability to think clearly. Meningiomas may sometimes irritate the brain's surface and cause epilepsy (seizures).

How Is a Meningioma Diagnosed?

The doctor may suspect a meningioma on the basis of the medical history and physical examination. The doctor will order computed tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the brain. A special x-ray of the blood vessels in the brain called angiography may be done if surgery is necessary.



Some people without symptoms need no treatment but will be checked regularly with CT or MRI to watch the tumor. Otherwise, treatment is usually surgery to remove the tumor.

Follow your doctor's treatment instructions, and keep follow-up appointments. Take your medicines as prescribed.



Keep healthy! Eat a healthy diet, reduce your stress, get enough sleep, and exercise daily if you can.

Call your doctor if you have new or repeating symptoms or if symptoms become much worse.

How Is a Meningioma Treated?

Some people with small, slow-growing meningiomas and no symptoms need no treatment but will be checked regularly with CT or MRI to monitor the growth of the tumor. Otherwise, treatment is surgery. After the tumor is removed, it will be examined to see whether it's cancerous. If it is cancer, more treatment with radiation may be used. In some cases, non-invasive radiosurgery (focused radiation [gamma knife]) may be used to treat deep tumors that are hard to reach surgically. For seizures before or after surgery, antiseizure medicine may be taken to prevent more seizures.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing a Meningioma:

- ✓ **DO** follow treatments as prescribed by your doctor.
- ✓ **DO** keep all follow-up appointments to monitor growth of your tumor.
- ✓ **DO** return to activity and take medicines as prescribed by your doctor. Exercise daily if your doctor says you can.
- ✓ **DO** eat a healthy diet.
- ✓ **DO** get enough sleep and reduce your stress.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have new or repeating symptoms, or if symptoms become much worse.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have problems with your medicines.
- ✓ **DO** look for a support group if you think that will help you cope.
- ⊗ **DON'T** panic. In most cases, your illness can be cured with surgery.
- ⊗ **DON'T** drive if you've had a seizure, unless your doctor says that you can.

FROM THE DESK OF

NOTES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- National Brain Tumor Foundation
Tel: (800) 934-2873
Website: <http://www.brainumor.org>
- Mayo Clinic
Website: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/>