



Does this child or teenager have a brain tumor?

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Cancers of the central nervous system are the most frequent type of solid tumors in children. Approximately 2,500-3,000 children are diagnosed with a brain tumor in the U.S. each year. Consider these symptoms and tests below during a patient evaluation.

Things to consider in evaluating a patient with a potential brain tumor:

- Headache that awakens a child from sleep regularly.
- Headache that is occipital in nature.
- Peculiar headaches.
- Headaches associated with vomiting.
- First-ever seizure, without associated fever or other signs.
- Unusual eye movements (crossed eyes, can't look up appropriately, wandering eye).
- Ataxia or weakness.
- Slurred speech or trouble managing secretions.

Initial tests to perform when considering a brain tumor:

- Complete physical and neurologic examination with blood pressure assessment.
- Computed tomography (CT) scan.
- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), if time allows; prefer with and without gadolinium enhancement.
- NEVER perform a lumbar puncture if a brain tumor is in the differential diagnosis (fear of brain herniation).

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