

Pituitary Tumor

Understanding your condition—and knowing what to do next

What is a Pituitary Tumor?

A pituitary tumor is a growth in a small gland at the base of the brain called the **pituitary gland**.

To understand this simply:

The pituitary gland is often called the “**master gland**” because it controls many hormones in your body. These hormones regulate important functions such as:

- Growth
- Energy levels
- Stress response
- Reproductive health
- Thyroid function

👉 A pituitary tumor is a growth that develops in this gland.

Is It Cancer?

This is one of the first concerns patients have.

👉 The reassuring news:

Most pituitary tumors are not cancer.

They are usually:

- **Benign (non-cancerous)**
- Slow-growing

However, even though they are not cancer, they can still cause problems because they:

- Affect hormone levels
- Press on nearby structures (especially the nerves for vision)

Why Do Pituitary Tumors Cause Symptoms?

Because of where the pituitary gland is located, a tumor can affect:

1. **Hormone production**
 - Too much hormone
 - Too little hormone
2. **Nearby nerves**
 - Especially the optic nerves (for vision)

👉 This is why symptoms can vary widely from person to person.

Symptoms to Watch For

Pituitary tumors often cause symptoms in two main ways:

1. Hormone-Related Symptoms

Depending on the type of tumor, hormone levels may increase or decrease.

When Hormones Are Too High

Different hormones cause different symptoms.

Excess prolactin (common type)

- Irregular or missed periods
- Milk discharge from the breast (even when not pregnant)
- Reduced fertility
- Low libido

Excess growth hormone

- Enlargement of hands or feet
- Changes in facial features
- Joint pain
- Sweating

Excess cortisol (stress hormone)

- Weight gain (especially around the face and abdomen)
- Fatigue
- Mood changes
- Skin changes

When Hormones Are Too Low

A large tumor may reduce normal hormone production.

This may cause:

- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Weight changes
- Low blood pressure
- Reduced energy

2. Pressure Symptoms (Mass Effect)

As the tumor grows, it may press on nearby structures.

Vision Problems

One of the most important signs:

- Blurred vision
- Loss of side vision
- Difficulty seeing clearly
- Double vision

👉 Patients often notice:

“I keep bumping into things on the side”

Headaches

- Persistent or worsening headaches
- Often located behind the eyes or forehead

Other Possible Symptoms

- Nausea
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue

Sudden Symptoms (Rare but Important) 🚑

In rare cases, a pituitary tumor can bleed suddenly (pituitary apoplexy).

Symptoms may include:

- Sudden severe headache
- Sudden vision loss
- Vomiting
- Confusion

👉 This is an emergency and requires immediate medical attention.

When Should You See a Neurosurgeon?

You should consider specialist evaluation if you have:

- Vision changes
- Persistent headaches
- Hormonal symptoms (irregular periods, fatigue, unexplained changes)
- A tumor found on a scan
- Symptoms that are getting worse

👉 A key point:

Many symptoms are subtle at first—but early evaluation makes a difference.

How is a Pituitary Tumor Diagnosed?

While this page focuses on treatment, it helps to understand the process.

Diagnosis may involve:

- MRI brain scan
- Blood tests to check hormone levels
- Vision testing

👉 This helps determine:

- Type of tumor
- Size
- Effect on surrounding structures

How is a Pituitary Tumor Treated?

Treatment depends on:

- Type of tumor
- Hormone activity
- Size
- Symptoms

👉 The goal is:

To treat the tumor while restoring normal hormone balance and protecting vision

1. Observation (Monitoring)

Some small tumors may not need immediate treatment.

This involves:

- Regular scans
- Hormone checks
- Monitoring symptoms

👉 This approach is safe for selected patients.

2. Medication

Some pituitary tumors can be treated with medication.

This is especially effective for:

- Certain hormone-producing tumors

Medication can:

- Reduce tumor size
- Control hormone levels

👉 In some cases, this avoids the need for surgery.

3. Surgery (Most Common Treatment)

Surgery is recommended when:

- The tumor is affecting vision
- The tumor is large
- Hormones are not controlled with medication
- Symptoms are significant

Endoscopic Pituitary Surgery (Keyhole Surgery)

This is the most advanced and commonly used technique.

👉 It is performed through the nose:

- No visible cuts on the face
- Minimally invasive
- Faster recovery

The surgeon uses a small camera (endoscope) to reach the tumor.

👉 Benefits include:

- Less discomfort
- Shorter hospital stay
- Faster return to normal activities

4. Radiotherapy

Radiation may be used when:

- The tumor cannot be fully removed
- The tumor grows again
- Additional control is needed

👉 It works gradually over time to stop tumor growth.

Frequently Asked Questions

“Is pituitary surgery safe?”

Modern endoscopic techniques have made surgery safer and more precise.

“Will my hormones return to normal?”

Many patients experience improvement, but some may need long-term hormone management.

“Will I have a scar?”

No visible scar with endoscopic (through the nose) surgery.

“How long is recovery?”

Most patients recover relatively quickly, depending on the individual case.

Why Choose a Specialist?

Pituitary tumors require **specialised expertise**, especially because they involve both the brain and hormone systems.

Choosing the right specialist ensures:

- Accurate diagnosis
- Proper hormone evaluation
- Safe and precise surgery
- Access to modern endoscopic techniques
- Long-term follow-up care

As a **Consultant Neurosurgeon**, I specialise in:

- Pituitary and skull base surgery
- Endoscopic (keyhole) techniques
- Brain tumor management

My approach is:

- ✓ Clear, simple explanations
- ✓ Careful review of scans and tests
- ✓ Individualised treatment planning
- ✓ Minimally invasive techniques where possible
- ✓ Support throughout your journey

👉 Most importantly:

You are treated as a person—not just a diagnosis.

A Reassuring Thought

Hearing the word “tumor” can be frightening.

But it is important to remember:

- 👉 Most pituitary tumors are not cancer
- 👉 Many are treatable
- 👉 Modern surgery is advanced and minimally invasive
- 👉 Early treatment can protect vision and hormone function

You are not alone—and effective treatment options are available.

Take the First Step Toward Clarity

If you are experiencing:

- Vision changes
- Hormonal symptoms
- Persistent headaches

Or if you have been diagnosed with a pituitary tumor—

👉 It is important to seek proper evaluation.

A consultation can help you understand:

- What your diagnosis means
- Whether treatment is needed
- What your options are

Book Your Consultation

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- 👉 Don't wait for symptoms to worsen
- 👉 Early assessment provides clarity and peace of mind
- 👉 The right treatment can protect your vision and overall health

Take the first step today—your health matters.