

# NEUROBLASTOMA

## What is neuroblastoma

It is a cancer arising from cells involved in the development of the nervous system called neural crest cells. It often presents as a lump inside the abdomen of a child.

## Who can get neuroblastoma

Although it is known to be found in children upto 21 years of age it is most common in children less than 5 years.

## Why does it happen

There is no specific cause. It is just like a random accident. The cause is still unknown but is certainly not infectious or something which is passed down from parents.

## What are the symptoms

Neuroblastoma may present with a lump in the tummy. This may be associated with fever, the child being more irritable and cranky. The blood pressures are often high due to certain substances that the neuroblastoma secretes.

It can also present with weakness of the body if it grows into the spinal canal.

Certain substances secreted by the tumor may cause abnormal eye and body movements in some young kids.

Once the neuroblastoma has spread it can involve various organs and result in different symptoms.

Young children often present with enlargement of an eye due to spread of the cancer there.

## Which organs are involved

It usually arises above one of the kidneys from organ called adrenals. Sometimes it can also arise from neural tissue adjacent to the spine. It can spread to the bones, bone marrow, lungs, brain, liver etc.

## How is it diagnosed

It is diagnosed by a biopsy from the involved organ. The doctor may also do blood and urine tests to aid diagnosis. MRI and CT scans can be used to assess the extent of the tumor and a specialized scan called MIBG or PET scan can be used to assess spread in the body. Other specialized tests may also be needed

## Is there a treatment for Neuroblastoma?

The doctor may classify the child tumor into risk groups depending on the result of various tests.

Neuroblastoma can be treated using chemotherapy, surgery, radiotherapy and sometimes bone marrow transplant in few cases.

The treatment lasts from 6 months to 18 months depending on the risk stratification

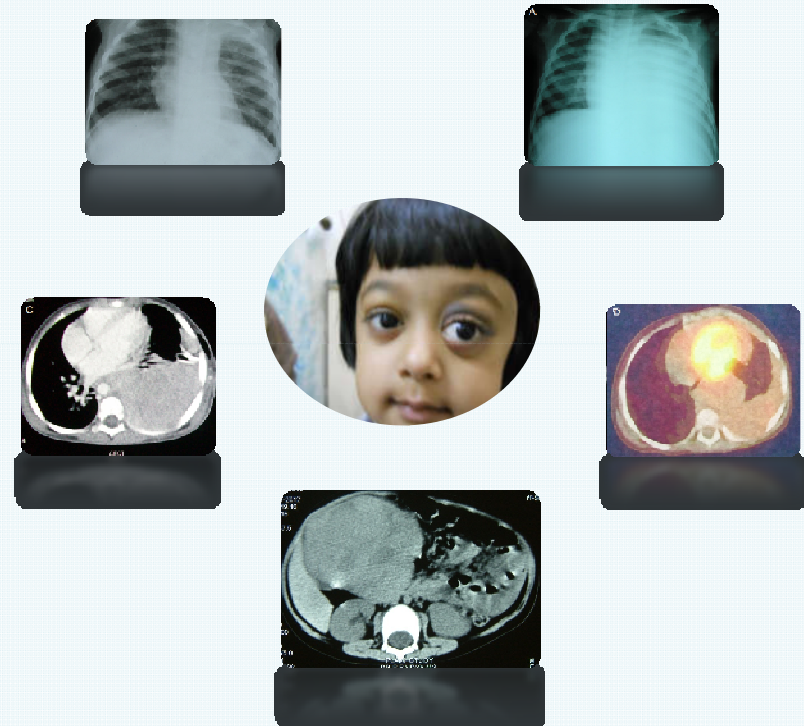
Low risk neuroblastoma has good chances of cure (80-90%) whereas for high risk it is about 40-50 %

## Are there side effects of treatment?

Yes and side effects can include feeling sick, vomiting, diarrhea, hair loss, increased risk of infection, bruising and bleeding and tiredness. Late side effects of treatment may be effects on the heart, kidney, fertility and growth.



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