

Do You Know the Most Common Signs of a Brain Tumor?

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✓ Fact Checked

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › According to the National Brain Tumor Society, about 700,000 Americans are living with a primary brain tumor and upward of 79,000 more will be diagnosed with a tumor in 2018
- › Due to the 1 in 3 survival rate associated with malignant brain tumors, you'll want to take steps now to safeguard your brain health
- › The most common signs of a brain tumor include changes in memory, mood and vision, as well as nausea, persistent headaches, seizures and weakness/numbness
- › EMF exposure, including cellphone use, contributes to chronic illness and you'd be wise to reduce your exposure to cell towers, cellphones, microwaves, "smart" products, Wi-Fi and wireless products

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According to the National Brain Tumor Society, about 700,000 Americans are living with a primary brain tumor and upward of 79,000 more will be diagnosed with a tumor in 2018.¹ At a minimum, a brain tumor of any kind will radically impact your quality of life, whereas the malignant variety affords you little more than a 1 in 3 chance of survival.²

Because the most common form of malignant brain tumor presents with a five-year relative survival rate of less than 6%,³ you'll want to do all you can to safeguard your brain health. This includes recognizing the most common signs of a brain tumor. Later in this article I'll share tips on how to reduce your exposure to electromagnetic fields

(EMFs) – one of several factors believed to contribute to brain tumors and other serious health conditions.

Eight Common Symptoms of a Brain Tumor

While some of these symptoms could signal a different health condition needing attention, below is a list of symptoms you may experience if you have a brain tumor. Very often, more than one of these symptoms will be present, aiding your doctor in making an accurate diagnosis. Eight of the most common symptoms of a brain tumor are:^{4,5}

Loss of balance – Persistent issues with balance, evidenced by clumsiness with respect to your arms and legs, as well as trouble with fine motor skills, may be signs of a brain tumor. If you previously had good coordination and suddenly begin to fumble and stumble when performing routine activities like reaching for a glass, tying your shoes or walking, you could have a brain tumor.

"Symptoms are often dependent on the location of the tumor," explains Dr. Donald O'Rourke, neurosurgeon and director of the Human Brain Tumor Tissue Bank at Penn Medicine in Yardley, Pennsylvania. "For example, if you have a tumor on your cerebellum – the part of your brain involved in coordinating sequences of movements – you may have trouble controlling your arms and legs."⁶

Memory loss and language issues – Episodes of confusion and forgetfulness may be signs of a brain tumor, especially if they are accompanied by severe **memory loss** and language issues. As an example, suddenly forgetting the words for common objects like "ball" or "cup" or being unable to recognize words or numbers on a page may be signs of a brain tumor.⁷

Memory loss may be accompanied by changes in your speech, such as problems understanding or retrieving words, as well as slurring or stuttering.

"Language problems such as stuttering, difficulty naming objects or understanding what others are saying are key symptoms of a tumor in the frontal or temporal lobes, areas of the brain associated with motor function of speech and language comprehension," says Dr. Christopher Carrubba, a health care and medical education consultant from Jacksonville, Florida.⁸

Mood and/or behavior changes — A dramatic change in mood and noticeable increases in risky and other acting out behaviors may be signs of a brain tumor.

"Patients suffering from a brain tumor may develop depression, anger or anxiety, even if they don't commonly exhibit these types of emotions," says Dr. Sumeet Vadera, neurosurgeon at University of California Irvine Health.

"This is related to tumor irritation or compression of portions of the frontal lobe, which is responsible for many of our personality traits."⁹

"A large, slowly growing tumor in the frontal lobe can even alter personality and judgment so far as to be mistaken for criminal behavior or psychiatric problems," notes Dr. Mike Chen, neurosurgeon and associate professor of neurosurgery at City of Hope hospital near Los Angeles.¹⁰ That said, uncharacteristic mood/behavior signs to look for that may indicate the presence of a brain tumor include:

- Acting overtly sexual
- Becoming increasingly and more easily agitated and angered
- Engaging in risky behaviors
- Showing less inhibition

Nausea and vomiting — While nausea and vomiting may be associated with many illnesses, unexplained, frequent nausea and/or vomiting has been associated with brain tumors. If you have persistent queasiness that has no apparent root cause — and especially if it is accompanied with headaches or other symptoms — be sure to make an appointment with your doctor to have it checked out.

One-sided weakness or numbness — If you experience weakness or numbness, particularly on one side of your body, you may have a tumor in the frontal lobe area of your brain. Very often, the tumor will present on the side of your brain opposite the bodily weakness or numbness. "The right motor cortex controls the left side of your body and the left motor cortex controls the right side of your body," says Chen.

"If there are tumors anywhere along this pathway, these signals are completely disrupted, and the result is loss of function."¹¹ If you notice one of your arms or legs suddenly is not responding the way it used to, this may be a sign a tumor is pressing on your motor cortex. Keep track of your symptoms and review them with your doctor.

Persistent headaches — While persistent headaches can be associated with a brain tumor, even doctors find it difficult to distinguish headaches or full-blown migraines caused by brain tumors and those resulting for other reasons. Bring any new, persistent headaches that do not respond to over-the-counter pain relievers to the attention of your doctor.

"The best indicator is a new daily headache that won't seem to go away," states Chen. "These headaches tend to get worse over time and are often present when you wake up in the morning, when intracranial pressure is high from lying in bed for ... long periods of time."¹²

It's important to note the intensity of your headache pain is not necessarily correlated to the size or growth rate of the tumor. "A small, fast-growing tumor can cause as severe of a headache as a large, slow-growing tumor," says Dr. Santosh Kesari, neurologist, neuro-oncologist and chair of the department of translational neurosciences and neurotherapeutics at John Wayne Cancer Institute in Santa Monica, California.¹³

Seizures — While seizures are related to other health conditions besides brain tumors, the sudden convulsions, changes in consciousness and involuntary movements known to characterize seizures may be attributed to the presence of a brain tumor.

About seizures, researchers involved in a 2014 study published in the journal *The Oncologist* said:¹⁴

"Seizures are commonly seen in brain tumors, usually in the range of 40 to 60 percent. They often represent the first clinical sign of a brain tumor and count as a favorable prognostic factor, although reappearance or worsening of seizures may indicate tumor recurrence."

Seizures, which last only a short time, are caused by abnormal electrical activity in your brain. Of the many types of seizures, the kind you experience depends on the area of your brain that is sending out the abnormal electrical signals.

Vision changes – While your vision may change for any number of reasons, getting regular eye exams is one way to monitor changes in your brain that may signal the presence of a brain tumor. If you are experiencing blurred vision, double vision or a partial or complete loss of vision, you need to make an appointment with your eye doctor right away.

Dr. Adam Rubin, optometry specialist in Gaithersburg, Maryland, once completed an eye exam for a 9-year-old boy complaining of severe headaches and blurry vision in one eye.

About the exam Rubin stated, "Right away, I noticed his right pupil wasn't responding to light. That was alarming, and I continued looking more closely at the right eye." Upon further examination, Rubin noticed something even more troubling. "The optic nerve was completely discolored, a sign that can indicate a growth in that area. A tumor or large mass can press against the back of the eye, causing a pale-colored optic nerve head," he said.¹⁵

Given those concerns, Rubin referred the boy to a brain specialist who was able to identify the source of the issues – a benign tumor growing near the boy's pituitary gland. Fortunately, it was surgically removed, and the boy regained his health. Types of vision changes known to signal the presence of a brain tumor include:¹⁶

- Double vision can be a symptom of a tumor in your brain stem
 - Loss of your ability to look upward can be caused by a pineal gland tumor
 - Partial or complete loss of vision could result from a tumor in the occipital lobe or temporal lobe of your cerebrum
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There Is No Doubt: EMFs Damage Your Health

The negative effects of **EMFs** continue to ignite conversations and controversy worldwide. As society becomes increasingly more technologically advanced, you (and your brain) are being exposed to EMFs all day long – both inside and outside your home – whether you realize it or not.

In case you are not clear on what EMFs are or how they affect you, Dave Asprey, founder and CEO of Bulletproof and author of The New York Times best seller, "The Bulletproof Diet," provides a helpful working definition:¹⁷

"An EMF refers to the invisible cloud of electricity that surrounds electrically charged particles. When charged particles are moving (and they always are), they produce magnetic fields. Every living and nonliving thing you come in contact with has its own electromagnetic field.

Your body is designed to handle a fair amount of EMFs. Even if you lived a completely unplugged existence in the middle of the jungle, the planet you're standing on exposes you to EMFs. We humans emit electromagnetic energy, and there's no escaping ourselves."

Most EMF radiation emits from cell towers, cellphones, computers, smart meters and Wi-Fi, to name just a few of the culprits. Because wireless technology is here to stay, it's imperative you get educated about the negative effects of EMFs on your health and take steps to reduce your EMF exposure as much as possible. If you have been told EMFs are safe and not a danger to humans, you may want to consider:

- The telecommunication industry has manipulated federal regulatory agencies, public authorities and health professionals through powerful and sophisticated lobbying efforts, which has left consumers confused and unaware of the health risks associated with EMFs
- As was the case with smoking, the negative health effects from EMFs may not be immediately noticeable but will likely develop gradually and become recognized over time
- Without a doubt, among all the other EMFs, cellphone use is among the top public health threats of the 21st century

Effect of Cellphone Radiation on Your Health and Your Brain

As mentioned in the video above, a 2015 study published in the journal *Pathophysiology*¹⁸ indicated heavy cellphone use before age 20 increases your risk of developing **brain cancer** in your late 20s at a rate four to five times greater than those with minimal exposure. You can access more recent studies involving lab animals, which were completed by the U.S. National Toxicology Program¹⁹ and Italy's Ramazzini Institute, by clicking on the source links.²⁰

Those studies found "statistically significant increases in the development of the same type of very rare and highly malignant tumor in the heart of male rats – schwannomas."²¹ About the results, Ramazzini study authors said:²²

"The Ramazzini Institute findings on far field exposure to radiofrequency radiation (RFR) are consistent with and reinforce the results of the National Toxicology Program study on near field exposure, as both reported an increase in the incidence of tumors of the brain and heart in RFR-exposed ... rats.

These tumors are of the same histotype of those observed in some epidemiological studies on cellphone users. These experimental studies provide sufficient evidence to call for the re-evaluation of the International

Agency for Research on Cancer's conclusions regarding the carcinogenic potential of RFR in humans."

In my view, the primary hazard of cellphone radiation is not brain cancer per se, but rather, systemic cellular and mitochondrial damage. Such damage is not only harmful to your brain but has also been implicated for its contribution to a wide array of other health problems and chronic diseases. Holding a cellphone directly to your head and over your ear canal puts it in the perfect position to send large amounts of radiation into sensitive areas of your body.

Tips on Reducing Your EMF Exposure

There's no doubt EMF exposure is a significant hazard you need to address to safeguard your health. Below are some tips to help you begin limiting the EMFs in your life:

Seek to radically decrease your cellphone use and avoid carrying it on your body; use it only on speaker phone and hold the phone at least 3 feet away from you

Shut off your cellphone, Wi-Fi and the electricity to your bedroom at night and consider using a battery-powered alarm clock

Swap CFL and LED bulbs with incandescent bulbs and remove all fluorescent lights from your house

Refuse smart meters as long as you possibly can or add a shield to an existing smart meter

Replace your microwave oven with a steam convection oven, which will heat your food as quickly and far more safely

Use wired internet connections for all appliances, baby monitors, computers, game systems, keyboards, mice, phones, printers, thermostats and TVs; set your wired computers to "airplane mode"

While more research is needed to conclusively link brain tumors to EMFs, including cellphone use, you won't regret taking precautionary measures now to reduce your exposure. The benefits to your overall health will more than make it worth your time and energy.

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