

Carcinoid Tumor - Stages [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 03/2014

ON THIS PAGE: You will learn about how doctors describe a tumor's growth or spread. This is called the stage. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Staging is a way of describing where the tumor is located, if or where it has spread, and whether it is affecting other parts of the body. Doctors use diagnostic tests to find out the cancer's stage, so staging may not be complete until all of the tests are finished. Knowing the stage helps the doctor to decide what kind of treatment is best and can help predict a patient's prognosis, which is the chance of recovery. There are different stage descriptions for different types of carcinoid tumors.

Gastrointestinal carcinoid tumor

There is no standard system for staging a gastrointestinal carcinoid tumor, except for a carcinoid tumor in the pancreas, which uses the same staging system as [pancreatic cancer](#) [3]. Some doctors use the same system that is used for other cancers of the same organ. For example, a stomach carcinoid tumor may be staged similarly to [stomach cancer](#) [4].

Because there is no standard system, many doctors classify each gastrointestinal carcinoid tumor into one of three general stages:

Localized. The carcinoid tumor has not spread outside of the wall of the primary organ, such as the stomach, colon, or intestine.

Regional spread. The carcinoid tumor has spread through the wall of the primary organ to nearby tissues, such as fat, muscle, or lymph nodes.

Distant spread. The carcinoid tumor has spread to tissues or organs far away from the primary organ, such as the liver, bones, or lungs.

Recurrent. A recurrent tumor is a tumor that has come back after treatment. If there is a recurrence, the cancer may need to be staged again (called re-staging).

Lung carcinoid tumor

The staging of a lung carcinoid tumor is the same as the staging of non-small cell lung cancer

(NSCLC). Learn more about [lung cancer staging](#) [5].

Information about the cancer's stage will help the doctor recommend a treatment plan. The next section helps explain the treatment options for this type of cancer. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Treatment Options, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.

Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/carcinoid-tumor/stages>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19501>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19651>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19154>