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## **Central Nervous System Tumors - Childhood - Stages and Grades [1]**

This section has been reviewed and approved by the **Cancer.Net Editorial Board [2]**, 05/2014

**ON THIS PAGE:** You will learn about how doctors describe a tumor's growth or spread. This is called the stage or grade. 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 tumor'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.

Several types of childhood CNS tumors can spread through the spinal fluid that surrounds the brain and the spine. For most types of CNS tumors, the tumor is described as either high-grade or low-grade, depending on how much of the tumor is left after surgery, the child's age, and whether the tumor has spread. In general, a child with a low-grade tumor has a better prognosis.

A recurrent tumor is a tumor that comes back after treatment. If there is a recurrence, the tumor may need to be staged and graded again.

There are different stage descriptions for different types of tumors. Read more about staging for a specific type of CNS tumor [3]. For example, review the Stages section in Cancer.Net's guide to astrocytoma [4], if that is the specific diagnosis.

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

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### Links:

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/central-nervous-system-tumors-childhood/stages-and-grades>

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

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18488>