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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 \[2\]](#), 04/2015

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 the tumor does return, there will be another round of tests to learn about the extent of the recurrence. These tests and scans are often similar to those done at the time of the original [diagnosis \[3\]](#).

There are different stage descriptions for different types of tumors. Read more about staging for a [specific type of CNS tumor \[4\]](#). For example, review the Stages and Grades section in Cancer.Net's guide to [astrocytoma \[5\]](#), if that is the specific diagnosis.

Information about the tumor's stage and grade will help the doctor recommend a specific

treatment plan. The [next section in this guide is Treatment Options](#) [6]. Or, use the menu on the side of your screen to choose another section to continue reading this guide.

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/node/18665>

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

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/31336>

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18667>