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[Ependymoma - Childhood - Stages and Grades](#) [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 11/2015

ON THIS PAGE: You will learn about how doctors describe the growth or spread of ependymoma. This is called the stage and 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. There are different stage descriptions for different types of tumors.

There is no formal staging system for ependymoma. However, it can be classified based on where in the brain the tumor is located and whether it has spread.

- **Supratentorial:** The tumor is above the membrane that covers the cerebellum, known as the tentorium cerebella.
- **Infratentorial:** The tumor is growing below the tentorium cerebella.
- **Spinal:** The tumor is growing in the central canal of the spinal cord or at the bottom of the spinal canal.
- **Recurrent:** A recurrent tumor is a tumor that has come 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].

Grade (G)

Doctors also describe ependymoma by its grade, which describes how much the tumor cells look like healthy cells when viewed under a microscope. The doctor compares the tumor's tissue with healthy tissue. Healthy tissue usually contains many different types of cells grouped together. If the tumor cells look similar to healthy tissue and contains different cell groupings, it is called differentiated or a low-grade tumor. If the tumor's tissue looks very different from healthy tissue, it is called poorly differentiated or a high-grade tumor. The tumor's grade may help the doctor predict how quickly it will spread. In general, the lower the tumor's grade, the better the prognosis.

Information about the stage and grade will help the doctor recommend a specific treatment plan. The [next section in this guide is Treatment Options](#) [4]. 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/ependymoma-childhood/stages-and-grades>

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

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18774>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18776>