

Germ Cell Tumor - Childhood - Stages [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 09/2014

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 a 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 are two types of staging for germ cell tumors, based on whether the patient has had surgery yet. First, the clinical stage is based on the results of tests done before surgery, such as a physical examination, CT scans, and MRI tests. Then, the pathologic stage is assigned based on information found during surgery, plus the laboratory results of any tissue removed during surgery. The stage provides a common way of describing the cancer so doctors can work together to plan the best treatments.

According to the Children's Oncology Group, the following pathologic stages are used for germ cell tumors:

Stage I: The tumor has been entirely removed, and tumor markers are normal, or return to normal after surgery.

Stage II: Microscopic traces of the tumor are still present after surgery; tumor markers do not return to normal following surgery.

Stage III: Visible traces of tumor are left behind after initial treatment, and the lymph nodes are significantly affected.

Stage IV: The tumor has spread from its original site to other, more distant areas of the body.

Recurrent: A recurrent tumor is one that has come back after treatment. It may recur at the original site of the tumor or in another place. If there is a recurrence, the tumor may need to be staged again using the system above, in a process called re-staging.

Information about the tumor's stage will help the doctor recommend a treatment plan. The next section helps explain the treatment options for this type of tumor. 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/germ-cell-tumor-childhood/stages>

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