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Islet Cell Tumor - Stages [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 cancerous 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 tumor's stage, so staging may not be complete until all the tests are finished. Knowing the stage helps the doctor decide what kind of treatment is best and can help predict a patient's prognosis, which is the chance of recovery. For example, people with a smaller tumor may not need surgery, while many people with a larger tumor do. This is because an islet cell tumor smaller than 2 centimeters (cm) in size acts like a benign tumor almost 100% of the time.

There is no standard staging system for an islet cell tumor, so the doctor will most likely classify the tumor into one of the following groups:

- A tumor in the pancreas that is only found in one site
- A tumor in the pancreas that is found in multiple sites
- A tumor that has spread to the lymph nodes or other parts of the body. Lymph nodes are tiny, bean-shaped organs that help fight infection.
- A recurrent tumor, which is a tumor that has come back after treatment

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/islet-cell-tumor/stages
[2] http://www.cancer.net/about-us