

## **Lacrimal Gland Tumor - Overview** [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 05/2012

**ON THIS PAGE:** You will find some basic information about this disease and the parts of the body it may affect. This is the first page of Cancer.Net's Guide to Lacrimal Gland Tumor. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen. Think of that menu as a roadmap to this full guide.

The lacrimal glands are the glands that secrete tears and are located above and to the side of the eye. When lacrimal gland cells become abnormal and multiply, they form a growth of tissue called a tumor. A lacrimal gland tumor can be benign (noncancerous) or malignant (cancerous, meaning it can spread to other parts of the body). There are four major types of lacrimal gland tumors:

**Benign mixed epithelial tumor.** A benign mixed epithelial tumor is a noncancerous tumor that does not spread to other parts of the body but will continue to grow if not treated. This type of tumor begins in the cells that line the lacrimal gland.

**Malignant mixed epithelial tumor.** A malignant mixed epithelial tumor also begins in the cells that line the lacrimal gland. If it is not treated, it will spread to other parts of the body.

**Lymphoma.** Lymphoma can involve various structures of the eye; however, the conjunctiva (the mucous membrane lining the inner surfaces of the eyelids and the outer surface of the white of the eye) and lacrimal glands are the most common. Most ocular (eye-related) lymphoma is [non-Hodgkin lymphoma](#) [3], and may be associated with systemic (whole body) or central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) lymphoma.

**Adenoid cystic carcinoma (AdCC) of the lacrimal gland.** [AdCC](#) [4] is a rare form of adenocarcinoma, which is a broad term covering any cancer arising from glandular tissues. An AdCC tumor is characterized by a distinctive pattern, in which bundles of epithelial cells surround and/or infiltrate ducts or glandular structures within the organ. When an AdCC tumor of the lacrimal gland grows, it commonly pushes the eye forward and causes it to bulge, a condition called proptosis. Another characteristic is pain, due to local nerves being invaded by the tumor.

Find out more about [basic cancer terms used in this section](#) [5].

*To continue reading this guide, use the menu on the side of your screen to select another section.*

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**Links:**

- [1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/lacrimal-gland-tumor/overview>
- [2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>
- [3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19207>
- [4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18411>
- [5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24928>