

Neuroendocrine Tumor - Staging [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 04/2014

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 a cancerous 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 cancer's stage, so staging may not be complete until all 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 cancers.

There is no standard staging system for a neuroendocrine tumor. The stages used to describe a pancreatic neuroendocrine tumor are the same as the [stages for pancreatic cancer](#) [3]. The following staging system is commonly used for Merkel cell cancer:

Stage I: The primary tumor is 2 centimeters (cm) or smaller at its widest part, and cancer has not spread to the lymph nodes or to other parts of the body. Lymph nodes are tiny, bean-shaped organs that help fight infection.

Stage IIA and IIB: The tumor is larger than 2 cm and has not spread to the lymph nodes or other parts of the body.

Stage IIC: The tumor has spread to nearby bone, muscle, connective tissue, or cartilage but not to the lymph nodes or distant parts of the body.

Stage III: The cancer has spread to the lymph nodes and may have spread to nearby bone, muscle, connective tissue, or cartilage.

Stage IV: The tumor has spread to distant parts of the body, such as the liver, lung, bone, or brain.

Recurrent: Recurrent cancer is cancer that has come back after treatment. If there is a recurrence, the cancer may need to be staged again (called re-staging) using the system above.

Source: National Cancer Institute.

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/neuroendocrine-tumor/stages>

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

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19501>