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[Pituitary Gland Tumor - Symptoms and Signs](#) [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 03/2016

ON THIS PAGE: You will find out more about body changes and other things that can signal a problem that may need medical care. To see other pages, use the menu.

People with a pituitary gland tumor may experience the following symptoms or signs. Sometimes, people with a pituitary gland tumor do not have any of these changes. Or, the cause of a symptom may be another medical condition that is not a pituitary gland tumor.

- Headaches
- Vision problems
- Changes in menstrual cycles in women
- Impotence, which is the inability to achieve or maintain an erection in men and is caused by hormone changes
- Infertility, meaning the inability to have children
- Inappropriate production of breast milk

- Cushing's syndrome, a combination of weight gain, high blood pressure, diabetes, and easy bruising that is caused by overproduction of ACTH
- Acromegaly, the enlargement of the extremities or limbs and thickening of the skull and jaw caused by too much growth hormone
- Unexplained tiredness
- Mood changes
- Irritability

A pituitary tumor causes symptoms in 3 different ways, which are discussed below:

- **By producing too much of 1 or more hormones.**
 - **Growth hormone.** The symptoms depend on a patient's age. In children, before the bone plates have closed, increased growth can cause gigantism, which is excessive body size and height. In adults, increased growth hormone causes acromegaly, a syndrome that includes excessive growth of soft tissues and bones, high blood sugar, high blood pressure, heart disease, sleep apnea, increased snoring, carpal tunnel syndrome, and pain, including headaches.
 - **Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH).** Too much TSH causes increased production of thyroid hormone. This can lead to nervousness and irritability, fast heart rate and high blood pressure, heart disease, increased sweating, thin skin, and weight loss.
 - **Prolactin.** Too much prolactin, a hormone that stimulates lactation and the secretion of progesterone, causes inappropriate secretion of breast milk, even in men. It can also cause osteoporosis, which is weakening of the bones; loss of sex drive; infertility; irregular menstrual cycles; and impotence.
 - **Adrenocorticotrophic hormone.** Too much of this hormone causes weight gain, particularly in the body's trunk. It can also cause high blood pressure, high blood sugar, brittle bones, emotional changes, stretch marks on the skin, and easy bruising.

- **Gonadotropins (FSH and LH).** These are usually not high enough to cause symptoms but can, in rare cases, cause infertility and irregular menstrual cycles in women.
- **By pressing on the pituitary gland, causing it to make too little of 1 or more hormones.**
 - **Growth hormone.** Not enough growth hormone causes late growth in children, poor muscle strength, irritability, weakening of bone strength, and an overall unwell feeling.
 - **TSH.** Low TSH causes fatigue, low energy, sensitivity to cold temperatures, constipation, and weight gain.
 - **Prolactin.** Too little prolactin causes inability to breastfeed after a woman gives birth to a baby.
 - **ACTH.** Too little of this hormone causes fatigue and low energy, low blood pressure, low blood sugar, and upset stomach.
 - **Gonadotropins.** Low levels of gonadotropins cause infertility, decrease in sex drive, impotence, and irregular menstrual cycles.
- **By pressing on the optic nerves or, less commonly, the nerves controlling eye movements, and causing either loss of part or all of a person's sight, or double vision.**

If you are concerned about any changes you experience, please talk with your doctor. Your doctor will ask how long and how often you have been experiencing the symptom(s), in addition to other questions. This is to help find out the cause of the problem, called a [diagnosis](#) [3].

If a tumor is diagnosed, relieving symptoms remains an important part of care and treatment. This may also be called symptom management, palliative care, or supportive care. Be sure to talk with your health care team about symptoms you experience, including any new symptoms or a change in symptoms.

[The next section in this guide is Diagnosis](#) [3]. It explains what tests may be needed to learn more about the cause of the symptoms. Or, use the menu to choose another section to continue

reading this guide.

Links

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/pituitary-gland-tumor/symptoms-and-signs>

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

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19540>