

## Fact Sheet

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### BRAIN TUMOURS

- ✦ A brain tumour can be benign (not cancer) or malignant (cancer). It can also be a primary tumour, arising in the brain itself or a secondary tumour, spread from another part of the body.
- ✦ In benign brain tumours, if the tumour can be removed successfully it should not cause any further problems. However, a small proportion regrow slowly and these recurrences can usually be removed, when necessary, by a further operation.

#### Detection and symptoms

- ✦ The effects of a brain tumour are varied and usually depend on the type of tumour, the size and its location in the brain.
- ✦ Tumours may cause:
  - Direct pressure which affects brain cells;
  - Shifting of the brain due to the tumour growth; or
  - Pressure which affects brain areas distant from the tumour, causing changes in their function too.
- ✦ Several generalised symptoms could be experienced which may include:
  - Lack of appetite.
  - Depression.
  - Irritability.
  - Fatigue.
  - Sleeplessness.
  - Sexual difficulties.
  - Erratic memory.
  - Restlessness.
  - Nausea.
  - Bladder problems or constipation.

#### Queensland

- ✦ 292 Queenslanders were diagnosed with brain cancers in 2008 (the most recent figures available).<sup>1</sup>
- ✦ 252 Queenslanders died from brain cancers in 2008.<sup>1</sup>
- ✦ Compared to the general population, 23.2 per cent of people diagnosed with a brain tumour survive for at least five years.<sup>1</sup>

The Brain Tumour Support Service of Cancer Council Queensland provides information about brain tumours and treatments; quarterly newsletters and referrals to support and rehabilitation services as well as practical and financial assistance. The Brain Tumour Support Service also holds regular meetings that provide opportunities to meet other people dealing with a brain tumour and hear health professionals discuss topics of interest. For more information please contact the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20.

Cancer Council Queensland can provide information and support about brain tumour diagnosis and treatment. For information, booklets and other resources, please call the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20.

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland Cancer Registry. 2011. *Cancer in Queensland: Incidence, Mortality, Survival and Prevalence 1982-2008*. Brisbane: QCR, Queensland Health and Cancer Council Queensland.

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