

Brain Tumor Rehabilitation

At University of Washington Medical Center

This handout is for brain tumor patients. It tells how a rehabilitation program can help in your recovery.

Why do I need a rehabilitation program?

Brain tumors can affect how you move, talk, see, swallow, and think. A rehabilitation (rehab) program can help you regain some of the abilities you lost because of your brain tumor. Our team of brain tumor experts will work with you to create a program to meet your specific needs.

What happens in rehab?

Your doctor may refer to you to:

- **Physical therapy:** A physical therapist (PT) can help you improve your strength and balance. You will learn exercises to improve your ability to walk and move. A PT can also help you relearn how to use certain muscles.
- **Occupational therapy:** An occupational therapist (OT) can help you build strength in your upper body. This will help you do your daily activities and return to your normal self-care routine.
- **Speech therapy:** Speech therapists can help you with problems in speaking, memory, swallowing, and *comprehension* (understanding).
- **Rehab medicine:** Rehab doctors (*physiatrists*) assess *neurologic* (nervous system) and *musculoskeletal* (structural) problems that affect how you think and move. Their findings help us know what services you need. They may also prescribe medicines or other treatments to help in your recovery.



Your doctor may refer you to a speech therapist as part of your rehab.

- **Neuropsychology:** Neuropsychologists assess how your tumor has affected your *cognition* (attention and memory) and emotions. Their findings help us know what treatments to offer you. They also help your doctors know when you can return to work or school.
- **Rehab psychology:** A psychotherapist who works with rehab patients will meet with you in private sessions. The goal of these sessions is to help you handle emotions and improve behaviors that may have changed due to your brain tumor. This therapist may also want to meet with your family members.
- **Rehab counseling:** Rehab counselors can help you adapt to changes caused by your brain tumor. They can help you plan your return to work, school, and other activities.

Follow-up Care and Rehab

Acute Care in the Hospital

Your doctor may advise physical, occupational, and speech therapy right after your surgery and during your hospital stay. Your therapists will assess your needs and help create your care plan. Your doctor may also suggest other kinds of care while you are in the hospital.

After Discharge

When you no longer need hospital care, your care team will assess your needs. Most people need some form of ongoing therapy after they leave the hospital.

If your care team suggests:

- **Home therapy**, we will arrange for therapists to visit you in your home.
- **Outpatient therapy**, you will return to the hospital or a clinic for therapy. This therapy will help improve how your brain and nervous system work. Some types of therapy can also teach your family how to care for your needs. We can give you a referral or prescription for these services before you leave the hospital.
- **A rehab facility**, it means you need more therapy before you can live at home. Your doctor may refer you to an *inpatient acute rehab facility* or a *skilled nursing facility*.

Questions?

Ask your healthcare provider if you may benefit from rehabilitation services.