Paediatric cancer is rare, but is fatal if not diagnosed and treated.

Most paediatric cancers are curable if found early and referred to Princess Marina Hospital immediately.

There are many types of paediatric cancers.

Recognition of cancer symptoms is life-saving!

If you think your child might have a brain tumour, retinoblastoma or rhabdomyosarcoma, your child’s doctor should consider the following based upon findings:

- Physical exam and identification of abnormal findings
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan is preferred or Computed Tomography (CT) scan of head, brain, and/or orbits
- Biopsy of mass

If cancer is suspected, your child’s doctor should consult the paediatric oncology team at Princess Marina Hospital.

Paediatric Haematologist/Oncologist at Princess Marina Hospital

Telephone
72259379

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BotswanaHOPE@txch.org

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Brain Tumours

Brain tumours are not a single kind of tumour, but include several tumour types. After leukaemia and lymphoma, brain tumours are the third most common childhood cancer.

They can occur in the central nervous system (CNS) and spinal cord. Together, the CNS & spinal cord sustain life processes such as: breathing, heart rate, movement, thinking and learning.

**Symptoms**
- Headaches (frequent, recurrent), especially after waking up in the morning
- Vomiting, especially in the morning upon waking
- Eye movement problems and/or vision changes
- Bulging soft spot on infant’s head or increased head size in infants
- Weakness of one side of the face
- Tilting of the head or neck to one side
- Unsteady gait or worsening balance

- Loss of previously acquired developmental milestones
- Weakness in the arms or legs or trouble walking
- Seizures
- Difficulty with speech, swallowing or drooling
- Back or neck pain, often awakening the child at night
- Change in bowel habits or trouble urinating

In new onset headaches, dizziness, and/or vomiting, a brain tumour should be considered.

Rhabdomyosarcoma

A cancer of the soft/ connective tissue. Most common sites where it occurs are around the eye, base of the skull, and head/neck (plus arms/legs & urinary/reproductive organs).

**Symptoms**
- A lump or swelling that keeps getting bigger & does not go away
- The lump may be painful
- Bulging of the eye or facial changes
- Headache
- Trouble urinating or having bowel movements
- Blood in urine
- Bleeding in the nose, throat, vagina or rectum

Retinoblastoma

A rare tumour that originates in the retina, a thin layer of nerve tissue that covers the back of the eye, allowing a person to see. This tumour occurs most often in children under age 5.

Doctors usually identify retinoblastoma on a routine well-baby exam.

**Symptoms**
- A pupil that looks white or yellow especially in bright light or in photographs
- A crossed eye
  (looking either toward the nose or toward the ear)
- Poor vision
- A red, painful eye
- An enlarged pupil
- Differently colored irises