

Colloid cyst

When you are diagnosed with a brain tumour, it is important to have access to reliable, accurate information that is relevant to you. In this fact sheet, you will find information specific to the type of tumour that you have been diagnosed with.

What is a colloid cyst?

A colloid cyst is a non-malignant tumour that is usually located in the roof of the third ventricle, which is a fluid-filled cavity in the centre of the brain.

Colloid cysts are quite rare and account for less than 2% of all primary brain tumours.

Generally, a colloid cyst is round in shape and filled with fluid. They tend to grow slowly, although the rate of growth and symptoms can vary from person to person.

For more information about what to expect at diagnosis, take a look at our patient guides: brainstrust.org.uk/patient-guides.

Causes of a colloid cyst

The causes of a colloid cyst are currently unclear, although they are believed to arise during embryo development.

Symptoms of a colloid cyst

Colloid cysts can be asymptomatic and can therefore be found incidentally during imaging.

If symptoms do occur, these can include:

- headaches and sometimes nausea and vomiting
- visual disturbances

- memory problems
- collapse
- loss of consciousness
- tinnitus
- behaviour change
- in extreme cases, coma.

You can find information about managing your symptoms by visiting brainstrust.org.uk/resources/downloads.

If you are experiencing symptoms that are causing you concern, speak to your clinical team.

Diagnosis

A colloid cyst is diagnosed on an MRI scan or a CT scan.

For more information about what to expect at diagnosis, take a look at our patient guides: brainstrust.org.uk/patient-guides.

We have produced our 'Who's who in your clinical team' guide to help you navigate your pathway and keep track of essential contacts within your clinical team. You can find this here: brainstrust.org.uk/whos-in-my-team.

Treatment options

The current treatment options available for colloid cysts include:

- **Active surveillance** – This is observation for small colloid cysts that are not causing symptoms (asymptomatic). This is usually advocated for cysts less than 9 mm in size that are not causing hydrocephalus (a build-up of fluid in the brain). The tumour will be monitored through MRI scans at regular intervals, usually every 6–12 months. Surveillance can continue for 5–10 years or longer.
- **Surgery** – This is usually performed for colloid cysts causing hydrocephalus or large colloid cysts (usually larger than 9 mm). In some cases, even smaller colloid cysts are removed, depending on the patient’s symptoms. The majority of colloid cysts can be removed by using a surgical device called an endoscope. This is a long tubular device that has a light source and a high-definition camera, and it has working channels to pass instruments through to remove the colloid cyst. The endoscope is inserted into the brain after making a small scalp incision and a small hole in the skull. In some cases, the endoscope may not be the best tool, and the cyst is then removed by performing a craniotomy, which allows larger access through the skull to remove the tumour. In an emergency scenario, if the colloid cyst is causing hydrocephalus, a shunt is inserted into the brain as a life-saving operation to relieve the increased brain pressure.

The treatment that you will be offered will depend on a number of different factors, and it will be decided by your clinical team and discussed with you.

To find out more information about neurosurgery, go to brainstrust.org.uk/treatment-information/surgery.

For information about treatment for a brain tumour, take a look at our patient guides: brainstrust.org.uk/patient-guides.

Living well with a colloid cyst

- **Coaching** – When life feels all-consuming by your brain tumour, coaching helps you to take control and focus on the things that matter the most. You will come away from your coaching sessions with strategies and tools to help you achieve clarity and improve your quality of life. To get in touch with a coach, email hello@brainstrust.org.uk.
- **Counselling** – When you find yourself in a time of distress and are struggling to cope, our rapid-access counselling service can help you to make sense of your situation and focus on specific, immediate goals. We can quickly connect you to a network of counsellors and give you the space to talk through your feelings in a safe and confidential place. Find out more: brainstrust.org.uk/counselling.
- **Thrive with *brainstrust* webinars and workshops** – ‘Thrive with *brainstrust*’ webinars and workshops are meticulously curated by *brainstrust* and hosted by leading experts to help you tackle the challenges that make life with a brain tumour so difficult. Find out more: brainstrust.org.uk/events.
- **Connect with others at a Meetup** – Meetups are an opportunity for you to connect with others who understand in a more informal setting. No matter where you are on your journey, you can share experiences and seek information from people who know what you’re going through. Find out more: brainstrust.org.uk/events.
- **Helpline** – In times of distress and fear, it can be difficult to know where to turn and who to talk to. The *brainstrust* helpline offers people with a brain tumour and their caregivers support, information and pragmatic advice over the phone and by email 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call **01983 292 405** or email hello@brainstrust.org.uk for 24/7 support.

- **Brain tumour hub** – The brain tumour hub is an easy-to-navigate database of brain tumour support resources and UK-based brain tumour clinical trials. It enables you to find support services in your area based on the type of support you want.
- **Downloads and resources** – *brainstrust* resources are designed to help you feel more informed, more in control and more engaged with your care, no matter where you are on your brain tumour journey. Go to **brainstrust.org.uk/resources/downloads** to download our resources and request a brain box. If you'd like hard copies rather than downloadable versions, please email **hello@brainstrust.org.uk**.

Sources

Tenny, S. and Thorell, W., 2022. *Colloid Brain Cyst*. [online] [Ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470314/). Available at: <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470314/>> [Accessed 5 September 2022].

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