Brain Metastasis

The term metastasis or metastasize is used to describe when a tumor spreads to other parts of the body. Some cancers can spread to the brain. Tumors in the brain may cause the following symptoms:

- Seizures
- Weakness or numbness in the arms or legs
- Problems with speech
- Dizziness or balance problems that make it hard to walk
- Changes in vision
- Headaches

Treatment of Brain Metastasis

If a brain tumor is found, your doctor will talk with you about your treatment choices. Your treatment may include:

- Dexamethasone (Decadron)
  Dexamethasone (Decadron) is a corticosteroid medicine used to decrease swelling. Tumors can swell putting pressure on the brain and brain tissue. Decadron is often started at a higher dose and slowly reduced over a period of time.

  **Do not stop taking this medicine without talking to your doctor first.** Your doctor will have special instructions for you to follow if you need to stop taking this medicine.

- Surgery
  Surgery may be done to remove a brain tumor. This may not be an option for all patients. A doctor who does brain surgery is called a **Neurosurgeon**. After surgery you will need time to heal before other treatments can be started.
• **Radiation Therapy**

Radiation Therapy (also called radiotherapy) is a treatment that uses high doses of radiation to kill tumor cells and stop them from dividing. The different types of radiation are:

- **Whole Brain Radiation** - Small daily doses of radiation are given to the whole brain. The most common side effects of radiation are fatigue, hair loss and skin changes to the radiation area. Patients normally have 10 radiation treatments over a two week period.

- **Radiosurgery** - This is a special form of radiation given in a single dose aimed directly at the tumors. Another name for this type of treatment is Gamma Knife® or Cyber Knife®.

- **Fractionated Stereotactic Radiotherapy (FSRT)** - This type of radiation is aimed directly at the tumors. This type of radiation is given in more than one treatment. FSRT can be used to treat larger tumors or those tumors that radiosurgery is unable to treat.

• **Chemotherapy**

Chemotherapy is a type of treatment that uses drugs to stop fast growing cancer cells from dividing and making new cells. Chemotherapy drugs may also damage healthy cells and cause side effects. These side effects often get better or go away after you complete treatment. Chemotherapy is not a primary treatment for most metastatic brain tumors. It is given to patients who are unable to have more radiation therapy.

**Is there anything else I should know about treatment?**

During your treatment for your brain metastasis, you may also need treatment for a tumor in another part of your body. It is important for you to keep your appointments with all your doctors while being treated for brain metastasis.