

Brain Cancer – Gliomas

Oligodendrogliomas and Oligoastrocytomas



This NCCN QUICK GUIDE™ sheet summarizes key points from the complete NCCN Guidelines for Patients®: Brain Cancer – Gliomas. These guidelines explain which tests and treatments are recommended by experts in cancer. To view and download the guidelines, visit NCCN.org/patients or, to order printed copies, visit Amazon.com.

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What are gliomas?

They are cancers of glial cells. Glial cells support nerve cells in the brain and spine.	10
Oligodendrogliomas derive from glial cells called oligodendrocytes. Oligoastrocytomas are a mixed-cell subtype of glioma.	14

What are the treatment options for grade II oligodendrogliomas and oligoastrocytomas?

Surgery is often used to confirm the presence of and to treat grade II gliomas. MRI is often needed to assess how much of the cancer was removed.	49
More treatment is often received after surgery. Only tumors that were fully removed or those with stable or no symptoms may be observed rather than treated. If more treatment is needed, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or both may be received.	49
MRI scans are needed on a regular basis to track treatment results.	50
If a grade II glioma returns, surgery may be an option. After surgery or instead of, you may receive radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or both if you weren't treated with radiation before. If you had radiation before, chemotherapy should follow surgery or may be the sole treatment if surgery isn't an option.	50



What are the treatment options for grade III oligodendrogliomas and oligoastrocytomas?

Surgery is often used to confirm the presence of and to treat grade III gliomas. If the tumor is fully removed, chemotherapy wafers may be placed into your brain at the end of surgery. MRI is often needed to assess how much of the cancer was removed.	52
Treatment options after surgery are based on your health and sometimes cell features. If healthy enough, you may be treated with radiation and chemotherapy if the cells have a 1p19q codeletion. If there's no codeletion, your options may include radiation, chemotherapy, or both. If your health is limited, you may receive a short or normal course of radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or supportive care.	54
MRI scans are needed on a regular basis to track treatment results.	54
If a grade III cancer returns, treatment options depend on where the cancer is and its extent. Surgery may be an option followed by chemotherapy, radiation, or supportive care. When surgical treatment isn't an option, other options include chemotherapy, surgery for symptoms, and supportive care.	56

How do you decide between options?

Ask your doctors many questions. Also, you could get a second opinion, attend support groups, and compare pros and cons.	69
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