ALL ABOUT PITUITARY TUMORS

WHAT IS THE PITUITARY GLAND?

- Small organ - about the size of an acorn
- Located at the base of the brain
- Cased the master gland because it releases hormones that control the basic functions of growth, metabolism, reproduction, and sexual function

WHAT DOES THE PITUITARY CONTROL?

The pituitary gland controls hormone production for many of the body’s systems including:

- Thyroid
- Adrenal glands
- Growth and healing

Reproductive functions including:

- Breast milk
- Ovulation
- Sperm production
- Sex organs
- Testosterone
- Pregnancy

TYPES OF PITUITARY TUMORS

Tumors can cause hormone imbalance and vision loss.

Pithyroid adenomas:

- Most common
- May cause:
  - Vision loss or double vision
  - Overproduction of hormones
  - Hormone deficiency

Other rare types:

- Pituitary Carcinomas
- Rathke’s Cleft Cysts
- Cerebropituitaryomas

WHO IS AFFECTED? WHAT CAUSES A PITUITARY TUMOR?

About 8,000 pituitary tumors are diagnosed in the U.S. each year.

However, autopsy studies show that over 10% of the world’s population has a pituitary tumor.

- 99% of pituitary tumors are benign adenomas
- Under the age of 50, females predominate
- Over 50, more common in males
- Tumors can grow inside or on the surface of the adenohypophysis

DETECTION AND DIAGNOSIS

Doctors will perform CT or MRI scans to detect a pituitary tumor and measure its size.

An ophthalmologist will test to see if the tumor is pressurizing or both optic nerves or other nerves that control eye movement and causing loss of vision or double vision.

An endocrinologist will check for abnormal hormone levels in the blood and urine.

TREATMENTS MAY INCLUDE

- Observation and continued assessments by physicians, including imaging
- Medication
- Focused radiating (i.e., radiosurgery)
- Minimally invasive endoscopic surgery

For more information on the Houston Methodist Peak Brain & Pituitary Tumor Center, visit www.houstonmethodist.org/peakcenter or call 713.526.8000.