

Life after treatment

Giving patients hope and teaching them to fully enjoy life after treatment for skull base tumors is an integral part of the care at M. D. Anderson. Patients discover that they can exceed the initial limitations after surgery, through the help of caring professionals in the many rehabilitative specialties:

- Audiology
- Behavioral psychology
- Language therapy
- Neuropsychology
- Nutrition
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Speech therapy
- Swallowing therapy

A clear choice

With a team approach to personalized care, featuring highly qualified staff dedicated to the comprehensive treatment of skull base tumors, M. D. Anderson offers patients the best hope for the most effective treatment. It's just one reason why we've been Making Cancer History® for more than 60 years.

Skull Base Tumor Program Management Team



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Skull Base Tumor Program



Complete care in a multidisciplinary setting



When faced with a tumor involving the skull base, choosing the right treatment partner can make a difference. The Skull Base Tumor Program at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center is committed to providing the best care available for patients with malignant or benign tumors affecting the skull base.

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Tumor focus

M. D. Anderson is one of the few cancer centers in the country with a specialized program for tumors of the skull base. Affiliated with both the Head and Neck Center and the Brain and Spine Center, our surgeons have extensive experience and are respected internationally for their ability to successfully treat tumors in this delicate and complex area.

Working as a team

The anatomic structure of the skull base is extremely complex and highly specialized. Located deep within the cranium, it is surrounded by vital structures of the head, neck and central nervous system. Diagnosing and treating tumors in this area requires the expertise and skill of many different specialists.

Skull base surgery can involve either open or minimally invasive techniques. At M. D. Anderson, treatment for each patient is tailored to address his or her specific needs by a team of experts who specialize in skull base tumors and who work together to provide the highest level of care to their patients. At regularly scheduled planning conferences, members of the following departments and specialties meet to give patients the most comprehensive approach available to skull base oncology care:

- Head and Neck Surgery
- Neurosurgery
- Neuro-Otology
- Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
- Ophthalmology and Neuro-Ophthalmology
- Head and Neck Radiology
- Head and Neck Pathology and Neuropathology
- Radiation Oncology
- Head and Neck Medical Oncology
- Neuro-Oncology
- Oncologic Dentistry and Prosthodontics
- Speech and Language Pathology
- Rehabilitation Services

New patients undergo an initial consultation with experts in the Department of Neurosurgery, Department of Head and Neck Surgery, or both. Patients receive complete diagnostic evaluation, treatment and follow-up care with the latest techniques and equipment.



Types of therapy

Treatment for tumors of the skull base may involve surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or a combination of therapies.

Open surgical approaches

Access to the complex anatomy of the skull base often involves intracranial and extracranial exposure through an open surgical approach. At M. D. Anderson, a team of neurosurgeons and head and neck surgeons work in concert to determine the best treatment strategy for each patient.

Minimally invasive surgery

Endoscopy: allows surgeons to access the tumor through tiny holes in the skull or back of the sinuses, reducing the extent of surgery as well as the patient's hospital stay, complications and recovery time.

Image-guided surgery: performed with the use of preoperative images of the patient's tumor to guide surgeons during the operation.

Real-time MRI: provides surgeons with precise images of the patient's tumor and surrounding anatomy during surgery, increasing surgical accuracy and enhancing complete removal of the tumor.

Proton therapy

Some skull base tumors are particularly well suited to proton therapy, a unique and very precise form of radiation therapy. For patients with these types of tumors, the new Proton Therapy Center at M. D. Anderson is a setting in which research and clinical applications come together to provide the most advanced, highest quality care for patients.

The Proton Therapy Center, which is the only treatment center of its kind in the Southwest and the only proton therapy facility located within a National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center, places M. D. Anderson at the forefront of cancer research and treatment.

