



## Facts about Neuroblastoma

- There are approximately 12,500 children suffering from some form of pediatric cancer.
- Neuroblastoma is an extremely rare childhood cancer, affecting 10 children in every million, usually before the age of 5.
- In the U.S., approximately 650 new cases of neuroblastoma are diagnosed each year.
- Originating from neural crest cells called neuroblasts in the sympathetic nervous system where nervous system tissue is present, neuroblastoma is a solid tumor cancer most commonly found near the adrenal glands (located on top of the kidneys and in the chest).
- The term **neuro** indicates "nerves," while **blastoma** refers to a cancer that affects immature or developing cells.
- The cause of neuroblastoma is unknown. Studies have shown that genetics and environmental factors are not involved.
- 40 percent of neuroblastoma patients are younger than 1 year when diagnosed, 35 percent are aged 1-2 years, and 25 percent are older than 2 years when diagnosed.
- In 70-80 percent of patients with neuroblastoma, the disease is not diagnosed until it has already metastasized (spread) to lymph nodes, liver, bone, bone marrow and/or skin. These cases are categorized as stage IV and have a less than 40 percent chance of surviving long-term, classified as more than three years. Less than half of these patients survive.<sup>i</sup>
- **No drugs or treatments are available today designed to specifically treat neuroblastoma.** Treatment often requires a combination of surgery, chemotherapy drugs designed for different types of adult cancers, bone marrow transplants and radiation therapy.
- The five-year survival rate for high-risk cases of neuroblastoma is less than 40 percent.<sup>ii</sup>
- There is a zero percent chance of survival for patients who relapse.
- Males have a slightly higher incidence of neuroblastoma than females. More than 40 percent of fully insured families with a child with neuroblastoma declare bankruptcy due to the high costs of treatment, often considered to be experimental.

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<sup>ii</sup> "Neuroblastoma," Norman J. Lacayo, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Division of Hematology-Oncology, Stanford University and Lucile Salter Packard Children's Hospital, February 10, 2005. Available at: <http://www.emedicine.com/ped/topic1570.htm#section~introduction>

Source: American Cancer Society

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