



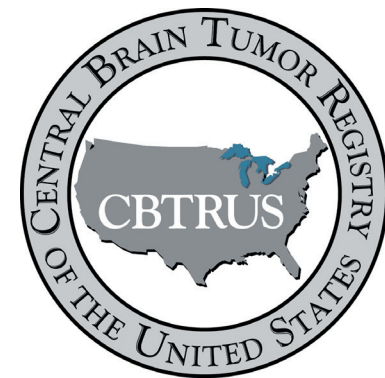
The Brain Metastases **PATHWAY**

An interactive guide to provide you with information on key steps of the brain metastases pathway.

Acknowledgments

This interactive PATHWAY Resource Library has been created for people living with brain metastases from breast, lung, colorectal and kidney cancers, and from melanoma.

The following organisations of the Brain Metastases International Collaborative have kindly endorsed the PATHWAY project:



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Welcome to the Brain Metastases **PATHWAY**

Every person living with brain metastases is unique and will face different experiences and challenges along their pathway. The same is true for their caregivers and support network. However, there are some key milestones that are important for everyone.

The **Brain Metastases PATHWAY** is an interactive guide for anyone affected by brain metastases linked to melanoma or breast, lung, colorectal or kidney cancer. It contains links to helpful information. Some of the information is on webpages, but you will also find links to a few booklets you can choose to print out, and to some videos.

All of the resources mentioned in this document have been selected and verified by the Brain Metastases International Collaborative (BMIC)* to meet the following criteria:

Accessible | Evidence-based | Engaging | Diverse, equal and inclusive | Balanced

Together, they should help answer some of the questions you may have about brain metastases in general, and those linked to specific types of cancer. There are sections on:

Diagnosis | Treatment and clinical trials | Living with brain metastases | Planning for the future

Receiving a brain metastases diagnosis can feel overwhelming. Friends and loved ones may also find it difficult to process. We hope having access to relevant information at key stages of the journey may help everyone affected feel supported and a bit more in control.

*BMIC: Working group consisting of patient organisations based in the UK, Europe and the US and representing breast cancer, lung cancer, melanoma, colorectal and kidney cancer.

The resources in this document are provided for support and information only and do not replace the guidance of your healthcare team. Please consult your healthcare team before making any changes to your care.

The Brain Metastases **PATHWAY**

The **PATHWAY** allows you to skip straight to information that is relevant to you. You can revisit it at any time if your circumstances change, or if you have further questions.

P

Preparation and awareness

Information to help you understand more about brain metastases and raise awareness of the disease and available supportive services.

A

Assessment and communication

Information on diagnosis of brain metastases, preparing for tests and discussions with your healthcare team and loved ones.

TH

Therapy and trials

Information on the different treatments and clinical trials for brain metastases.

WA

Wellbeing advice

Information and useful advice on living with and managing brain metastases, including rehabilitation.

Y

Your future

Information on preparing and planning for the future.

Within each section click on  to access the resource

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P | Preparation and awareness

Brain metastases occur when cancer cells spread from their original site to the brain.¹ If you or a loved one receives a brain metastases diagnosis, you may feel all sorts of emotions, all at once. Or you may feel numb. There is no right or wrong way to react.

Upon hearing this diagnosis, you may be told a lot of new information, which can feel difficult to take in. You may also have lots of questions, but feel unsure or unable to ask. The following resources may help fill in gaps and address some of your concerns. You can pick the ones that most interest you and look at them at your own pace.

Reference

1. American Lung Association, Brain Metastasis from Lung Cancer. Available from: <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/lung-cancer/symptoms-diagnosis/lung-cancer-staging/brain-metastasis> [Accessed January 2026]

General Resources



A good starting point is this guide from Brainstrust - **I have been diagnosed with a brain metastasis.**

It looks at common symptoms, treatment options and side effects. It also offers helpful advice for day-to-day living.



Another resource includes this **video from the ABTA** providing an overview of brain metastases treatment, explaining how they differ from primary cancer, how symptoms can vary between individuals, outlining how factors such as size, location, number of metastases, and treatment influence symptoms, side effects, and management.

You may want to find out more about brain metastases in relation to a specific cancer type:

Lung



GLCC - Brain Metastases

This factsheet explains what happens when lung cancer spreads to the brain, and the symptoms you may notice. It is available in many languages.



GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer - SCLC and NSCLC

You'll find lots more information about lung cancer here, including two booklets focused on brain metastases caused by small cell lung cancer (SCLC) and non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). They both cover symptoms, tests and scans, and treatment options.

Breast



Living Beyond Breast Cancer - Metastatic breast cancer to the brain

This webpage explains how breast cancer can spread to the brain and what symptoms to watch out for. There's also some helpful guidance on coping strategies and support.



ABC Global Alliance - Learning more about brain metastases in breast cancer

This video also looks at how breast cancer can spread to the brain, but in a video. It includes tips to help protect your wider well-being.



MBCBrainMets - Understanding breast cancer brain mets

This webpage provides an overview on the symptoms of brain metastases, diagnosis and treatment options.



ABC Global Alliance - RESOURCE HUB: Brain and leptomeningeal metastases

This resource hub provides resources reviewed by medical experts and patient advocates. You can filter by various categories to find the support you need.

Colorectal



Colon Cancer Metastasis to the Brain

This webpage is a helpful overview about brain metastases from colon cancer, including how they're diagnosed and treated. There are also sections about surgery, radiation, and the different medications to manage symptoms.

Kidney



ABTA - Understanding Kidney Cancer and Brain Metastases

This webpage looks at how kidney cancer can spread to the brain, this page has information about common symptoms, tests and treatment. It also links out to a free webinar that goes into greater detail.

Melanoma



Melanoma Research Alliance - Just diagnosed with Melanoma

Although this doesn't focus on brain metastases, this webpage is helpful for anyone recently diagnosed with melanoma. It has lots of essential information on getting support and looking after yourself during treatment. If you live in the U.S., you may also find the section on health insurance coverage useful.



AIM at Melanoma - Brain metastases

This webpage provides an overview on brain metastases, their treatment and diagnosis.



A | Assessment and communication

A brain metastases diagnosis can feel overwhelming. Your healthcare team may get bigger, and it is likely you'll have some tests or scans. You may worry about making decisions and being clear about your wishes. Remember, you're not alone. Support is available every step of the way. Hopefully the following links will help you access it.

General Resources

Brainstrust - I have been diagnosed with a brain metastasis (a secondary brain tumour)

This booklet explains what you can expect after a brain metastases diagnosis and suggests coping strategies to help you live better and connect with others. There is also a section especially for caregivers.

ABTA - A Handbook for the Newly Diagnosed (for Patients & Caregivers)

This handbook was written to help you, your family and your friends learn more about brain tumours. It also looks at those first hours and days after diagnosis, when you may have to make treatment decisions while still processing the news.

ABTA - Caregiver Handbook: A handbook for caregivers

This handbook is especially for caregivers. It looks at how family relationships may change after a brain tumour diagnosis, how to deal with healthcare systems, and why wellbeing matters.

ESMO - Guide for patients with advanced cancer: getting the most out of your oncologist

Do you struggle to get the most out of your oncologist appointment? This guide could help. It gives tips on how to prepare questions beforehand, and how to make sure your voice is heard. It is available in many languages.

You may want to find out more about brain metastases in relation to a specific cancer type:

Breast

MBCBrainMets - Frequently Asked Questions about metastatic breast cancer

This webpage contains a list of questions and helpful answers on metastatic breast cancer and brain metastases.

ABC Global Alliance - Why do brain metastases happen?

This informative video outlines the potential symptoms of brain metastases, the cause and method of diagnosis.

Lung

ALA - Lung Cancer and brain Mets: Jodi's story

Sometimes it is good to hear about other people's experiences. In this video, cancer survivor, Jodi B., shares her personal story of living with lung cancer that spread to her brain.

Colorectal

Colorectal Cancer Metastasis to Brain: Insights

This webpage provides an overview of the scans and tests that can be used to help guide treatment when colorectal cancer spreads to the brain.

Kidney

Kidney Cancer Metastasis to the Brain

This webpage looks at how kidney cancer can spread to the brain, this page has information about common symptoms, tests and treatment. It also links out to a free webinar that goes into greater detail.

Melanoma

AiM at Melanoma Foundation - Brain Metastases

This list of questions can help guide discussions about melanoma that has spread to the brain. You may want to print it out and take it to appointments, so you get the information you need from your healthcare team.



TH | Therapy and trials

Treating brain metastases often involves a combination of surgery, radiation therapy, and medications to manage symptoms and improve quality of life.¹ Your healthcare team should listen to your preferences, and tailor a treatment plan based on your specific needs.

General Resources

Brain metastases: Diagnosis and Treatment.

This webpage provides information on various treatment options for brain metastases and looks at the healthcare professionals you may be referred to for rehabilitation.


ABTA - Brochures on different therapies

Did you know metastatic brain tumours are the most common type of brain tumour in adults? This guide contains lots of helpful background and explains the different stages of treatment. You may wish to print it. It is available in English and Spanish.

ABTA - Research in CNS Metastases Your Care Starts in Lab

This webinar demonstrates the impact that precision medicine approaches have on the management of patients with brain metastases. It explains the challenges in the treatment of brain metastases and demonstrates how bench to bedside approaches can help identify new therapies for patients.

In some cases, clinical trials may be a treatment option. Clinical trials are a way of accessing new treatments, or existing treatments that are being used in a different way. There can be risks, so it is important to understand exactly what's involved.

 If you think you may be interested in participating in one, this guide may help: **ABTA - Understanding Clinical Trials for Brain Metastases: A Beginner's Guide.** It looks at how trials work, what to expect, and how to find them. It also links out to a more detailed video that may help you decide whether participating in a clinical trial is the right decision for you.

You may want to find out more about brain metastases in relation to a specific cancer type:

Breast

ABC Global Alliance - Brain metastases in breast cancer

This webpage contains some helpful videos, including one looking at how brain metastases in breast cancer are treated.

MBCBrainMets.org - Understanding Clinical Trials

This webpage provides an overview of the clinical trial process and links to a clinical trial search tool specifically for patients with brain metastases from breast cancer.

Clinical Trials for People with Metastatic Breast Cancer

This webpage includes several helpful questions and answers for those interested in joining a clinical trial.

ABTA - How Metastatic Brain Tumors Affect Your Breast Cancer Care

This webinar will help you to learn about the risk factors, signs and symptoms, treatment options, and management for brain metastases in breast cancer. It also explores research and advancements in treatment options and management of brain metastases.

Lung

ALA - Brain Metastases from Lung Cancer

If you've been offered radiation therapy, this guide is a must-read. It looks at how to prepare for treatment, how safe it is, and how to find the right healthcare team.

LUNGEVITY - What are brain metastases and how do we treat them?

A helpful list of treatment options, including targeted therapies and immunotherapy. The webpage also links out to a more in-depth video with a specialist oncologist.

ABTA - How Metastatic Brain Tumours Affect Your Lung Cancer Care

This webinar provides a deeper dive into the brain metastases experience for lung cancer, exploring risks, progression, signs and symptoms, treatment options, and management.

Colorectal

Fight Colorectal Cancer - Clinical Trials

This useful webpage provides a helpful overview of clinical trials and how to find a clinical trial.

Kidney

IKCC - Treatment options in brain metastases in kidney cancer

If you would like to know what doctors think about when choosing treatments for brain metastases in kidney cancer, this video should help.

IKCC - Understanding Clinical Trials

If you are wondering if a clinical trial may be right for you, this factsheet from the International Kidney Cancer Coalition gives important information about how they work.

ABTA - How Metastatic Brain Tumours Affect Your Kidney Cancer Care

This webinar provides a deeper dive into the brain metastases experience for those living with kidney cancer, exploring risks, progression, signs and symptoms, treatment options, and management.

Melanoma

Melanoma Research Alliance - Combating Melanoma Brain Metastases and Leptomeningeal Disease

This webpage is a good summary of what we know about melanoma brain metastases - and how doctors make treatment decisions.

AiM at Melanoma Foundation - Brain Metastases

Find out about common treatments for brain metastases on this webpage and things you can do to support your ongoing care.

AiM at Melanoma foundation - Multi-Disciplinary Brain Mets Clinical and Research

This video provides a summary of treatment for brain metastases and how treatment is determined.

ABTA - How Metastatic Brain Tumours Affect Your Melanoma Care

This webinar will help you understand how melanoma progresses and metastasises to the brain, providing an overview of risk factors, signs and symptoms, treatment options, and management of brain metastases in melanoma.

AiM at Melanoma foundation - What is leptomeningeal metastasis

This webpage provides a summary on leptomeningeal metastasis including the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

WA | Wellbeing advice

Living with brain metastases can be challenging. It can be mentally, physically and emotionally tiring. You may not always have the energy, but focusing on wellbeing can really help you feel better.

You may want to try some gentle exercise or wish to speak to a counsellor. Some people find peace of mind through practising mindfulness. You may be referred to see different therapists to help you regain strength or mobility.

General Resources

Living Well After Brain Cancer Treatment - Exercising for Enhanced Wellbeing

Discover the different types of exercise you can do to improve life with brain metastases in this webinar. It covers strength training, functional training, and Pilates.

Look good feel better - See Your Self Again

This webpage has lots of information and videos to help people with cancer feel more confident. You'll find guides about skincare, makeup, hair care, and more.

ABTA - How to Cope with a Brain Metastasis Diagnosis: Tips for Your Emotional Health

It can be tough to acknowledge difficult feelings, but it is important not to bottle everything up. This article suggests ways to look after your emotional health, and how to seek support.

ABTA - How to Stay Healthy with Brain Metastases

This webpage is full of practical tips to support your wellbeing, including gentle ways to move your body, eat for brain health, keep your mind active, and sleep well.

ABTA - The Emotional Journey of Brain Metastases

This video explores common areas of distress following diagnosis and provides tips on enhancing emotional wellbeing and extending quality of life.

ABTA - Weaving Quality of Life Through the Full Course of Your Brain Metastases Care

This video will help you understand the role supportive care plays from the time of diagnosis and throughout your care with Central Nervous System (CNS) metastases.

You may want to find out more about brain metastases in relation to a specific cancer type:

Breast

Living Beyond Breast Cancer - Managing Stress and Anxiety

This pdf provides friendly, practical advice to help you manage anxiety and different types of stress. You'll also find lots of tips on self-care.

Lung

Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation - Paul's story

This emotional account tells the story of Paul, who is living with advanced lung cancer and brain metastases. In it, he explains how he's turned his life around through exercise and by staying positive.



Colorectal

Fight Colorectal cancer - Mental health support

This webpage provides helpful resources to support you in managing your mental health.

Kidney

IKCC - My treatment, my choice

This booklet provides valuable advice on topics including nutrition, spiritual support and finance.



Y | Your Future

You may not want to plan ahead when you're unwell, but it can help you to feel more in control if you do. It can also help ensure your wishes are respected.

You may need to think about where you would like to receive care. There may also come a time when it is worth having conversations with your loved ones about any legal matters, such as wills or power of attorney.

Emotional support from counsellors, support groups, or faith communities can provide comfort during this time.

General Resources

Marie Curie - Planning ahead: Thinking about your care and wishes ahead of time

This webpage has a manageable list of things you may wish to consider, such as deciding where and how you want to be cared for, and how to make a will.

Advance Care Planning for People With Cancer and Their Loved Ones

You can find out more of the benefits of advance planning and learn about different care options on this webpage.

National Cancer Institute - End-of-Life Care for People Who Have Cancer

This fact sheet provides a detailed look at some of the decisions and emotions involved in end-of-life care, including important considerations for caregivers.

You may want to find out more about brain metastases in relation to a specific cancer type:

Breast

Mamma Mia - Metastatic breast cancer - this is how loved ones can help!

Mamma Mia is a German webpage aimed at the friends, family and caregivers of people with metastatic breast cancer. You can find tips on how to support loved ones, including how to approach difficult conversations around death.

Lung

Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation - Understanding brain metastases in lung cancer

This printable booklet gives advice on topics like driving, finances, and accessing extra support. It also talks about options for palliative care.

Colorectal

Fight colorectal cancer - Planning ahead and end of life

This webpage provides a variety of resources to support with planning ahead and end of life care.

Melanoma

Melanoma Focus - Spread of Melanoma to the Brain

This detailed webpage looks at melanoma brain metastases includes some important information about driving and other lifestyle adjustments.

The **PATHWAY interactive guide** aims to make it easier for people with brain metastases to find reliable information about their condition. We understand it can't cover everything you are experiencing. It is natural to have lots of questions and feelings following diagnosis, and throughout your treatment journey.

Remember, your healthcare team is there to support you – not just with any physical symptoms, but with your mental and emotional wellbeing too. Please reach out to them whenever you need to. We hope the PATHWAY gives you the confidence and knowledge to work with them and make shared decisions that feel right for you and your future.

Contact: hello@brainstrust.org.uk
or info@ABTA.org or visit www.abta.org

