

Ask Dr. Finger About:

- Radiation for choroidal melanomas
- Implants for enucleation surgery
- If you can speak with other patients who have had eye melanoma surgery like yours

How are choroidal melanomas treated?

The standard treatment options for patients with choroidal melanoma include observation for growth, radiation therapy, and enucleation (removal of the eye). Other treatments are likely to be investigational. In order to understand which option is best for you, we must divide tumors into 3 size categories.

Small melanomas can be treated after our first visit,

but since there is a chance that the tumor may not grow, and since evidence of growth is the most important reason to treat a melanoma, we usually watch small tumors for evidence of growth prior to treatment.

Medium-sized melanomas are usually treated with radiation therapy. The COMS Study suggests that radiation therapy is as good as enucleation (removal of the eye) for the prevention of spread (metastasis).

Large-sized melanomas can also be treated by radiation. But these treatments require such large doses that most patients lose their vision and many have to have the eye removed sometime in the following years.

FAQ's

Q: What is an intraocular melanoma?

A: A choroidal melanoma is a cancerous tumor that grows within the blood vessel layer beneath the retina called the choroid. This tumor is very rare and affects only 6 out of each million people each year in the USA.

Q: How do you know that my tumor is a melanoma?

A: By looking into your eye at your tumor, doing an ultrasound (sound wave) evaluation, and using specialized photography, we can accurately diagnose a choroidal melanoma in over 96% of cases without a biopsy. There is some added risk in the biopsy procedure, which is usually performed for atypical tumors and when a patient wants histopathologic confirmation of the diagnosis.