

Ask Dr. Finger About:

- 1) Techniques for the diagnosis of retinoblastoma
- 2) The use of chemotherapy, laser, cryotherapy, radiation and enucleation for retinoblastoma
- 3) Your child's pediatric oncology evaluation
- 4) Speaking with other parents who have children with retinoblastoma

How are most retinoblastomas treated?

Dr. Finger typically discusses [with all parents] the use of chemotherapy, cryotherapy (freezing), laser photocoagulation, radiation techniques and removal of the eye. This discussion includes all of the standard treatments for retinoblastoma and requires that we divide retinoblastoma eyes into 4 categories:

Small Retinoblastomas are treated with local eye and vision-sparing treatments (e.g. cryotherapy, laser, and plaque radiation therapy).

Medium-sized Retinoblastomas without Seeds are usually treated with eye and vision-sparing techniques (cryotherapy, laser, plaque radiation therapy). In these cases, chemotherapy may be used to shrink the tumor(s) before local treatments to make it more manageable.

Medium-sized Retinoblastomas with Seeds: Chemotherapy can be used in these cases, and the tumor(s) may shrink, but these eyes are more likely to fail “consolidation.” That is, some tumors are not likely to be made small enough for successful local treatments. In these cases external radiation or removal of the eye may become necessary.

Large-sized Retinoblastomas, Eyes with Secondary Neovascular Glaucoma, and Eyes with extrascleral extension: Though some eye-sparing treatment may be used, most of these eyes are removed in order to save your child's life.

FAQ's

Q: What is an intraocular retinoblastoma?

A: A retinoblastoma is a cancerous tumor that grows from the retina into the eye. It can spread to other parts of the body.

This tumor is the most common primary intraocular tumor in children, though very rare. Retinoblastoma affects approximately 350 children each year in the USA.

Q: How do you know that my child's tumor is retinoblastoma?

A: By looking into your child's eye, doing an ultrasound (sound wave) evaluation, and specialized imaging studies, eye cancer specialists are very accurate in diagnosing retinoblastoma.

Since we can correctly diagnose intraocular retinoblastoma in over 90% of cases (without a biopsy), and since intraocular surgery can risk your child's life, we usually do not take the added risk of these surgical procedures.