

# Retinoblastoma

## Definition:

Cancer of the eyeball arising from the retina

## Incidence:

- Most common eye malignancy in babies and children under the age of two
- Incidence is 1/20,000 live births
- Disease may arise in several locations within the same eye, and in about 30% of patients both eyes will be affected

## Symptoms:

May go unnoticed in the early stages because the child is too young to complain about visual problems. May present with a "lazy eye" or "cats eye reflex"

## Treatment:

Patients should be referred to an eye specialist with expertise in the treatment of Retinoblastoma. The BC Children's Hospital has such expertise. This tumour is malignant but highly curable with local measures (photocoagulation or cryosurgery) if diagnosed at an early stage. Radiation therapy and/or chemotherapy may be required especially if both eyes are involved. Removal of the eye may be necessary in advanced cases.

## Etiology:

There is an heritable form of the disease which accounts for 30-35% of cases but a family history is evident in only 6% of cases. Some patients with retinoblastoma have a D-Group chromosome deletion. The genetic basis of this disorder is becoming much better understood

## Prognosis

The overall cure rate is about 95%. Treatment is aimed at preserving vision wherever possible. Late recurrence or development of cancer in the remaining eye requires careful follow up.