

Neoplasms

A **neoplasm** is an abnormal new growth of tissue. **Malignant** neoplasms – cancers – are likely to spread and cause serious illness or death. **Benign** neoplasms do not spread and are less harmful.

When speaking to patients, doctors generally say **growth** or **tumour**.

You have a small	growth tumour	in the bowel.
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A **lump** or **swelling** is a collection of tissue or fluid which is visible or **palpable** – can be palpated or felt with the fingers. A lump may be due to a neoplasm, but there are other causes such as inflammation or fluid accumulation.

Patients say: “I have a lump in my left breast.”

Doctors say: “There was a firm, palpable **mass** in the liver.”

Malignant tumours are characterized by rapid growth and **invasiveness**. The tumour may **invade** local tissues or may **spread** to distant parts of the body (**metastasis**). Neoplasms which are result of metastasis are called **secondaries**, as opposed to the original tumour which is **primary**.

We have the results of the scan back now and I’m afraid they show that you have a small growth in the prostate. Fortunately, it appears to be **at an early stage** and there is **no sign of spread**. So if we **remove** it, there is every chance of a complete **cure**.

Note: To **invade** (verb) is to enter and spread throughout a part of the body, and this process is **invasion** (noun). If a tumour is described as **invasive**, it has the ability to spread.

Symptoms and signs of malignancy

The symptoms of malignant disease may be related to the size and location of the tumour. For example, a **space-occupying lesion** in the brain causes raised intracranial pressure and symptoms such as headache, vomiting, or visual disturbance. Tumours of the colon may **obstruct (block)** the lumen and cause change in bowel habit. Other possible symptoms of malignancy include bleeding, pain, and weight loss.

Case 55

A 33-year-old man presented to his GP complaining of a **painless lump** on the right side of his neck, which had been **present** for about two months and was **enlarging**. He had been feeling generally unwell and had lost about 5 kg in weight. He was also complaining of night sweats. He had no significant past medical history.

Treatment of tumours

A tumour can sometimes be completely removed or **excised** by surgery. If this is not possible, for example if it has already metastasized to other parts of the body, it may be possible to destroy it by radiotherapy or by chemotherapy. When a cure is not possible, **palliative treatment** is given, which is only intended to relieve symptoms.

Complete the table with the words from the above text.

Verb	Noun (s)	Adjective (s)
cure		curative
	excision	
grow		growing
		invasive
	obstruction	obstructive
palliate	palliation	
		palpable
	spread	spreading
swell		swelling, swollen

The notes below are about the patient described in Case 55, above. Use them to put the sentences (1-9) in the correct order, to make the next paragraph of the case report.

OE T 37.8 C
 smooth, firm 3 x 4 cm mass in R supraclavicular fossa.
 nodes 1-2 cm in diameter, palpable in both axillae and inguinal areas
 Oropharynx NAD
 P100/min regular BP 112/66
 CVS NAD RS NAD
 Abd mass palpable 3 cm below L costal margin
 CNS NAD

- 1 Examination of the central nervous system was normal.
- 2 His mouth and throat were normal.
- 3 There was a smooth, firm 3x4 cm mass in the right supraclavicular fossa.
- 4 His cardiovascular and respiratory systems were normal.
- 5 On abdominal examination, there was a mass palpable 3 cm below the left costal margin.
- 6 On examination, his temperature was 37.8 C.
- 7 There were enlarged lymph nodes in both axillae and inguinal areas.
- 8 His pulse rate was 100/min regular and blood pressure 112/66.

Complete the sentences. Look at the above text to help you.

- 1 Distant _____ of tumour cells is known as metastasis.
- 2 Many symptoms of cancer, such as difficulty swallowing, are due to _____.
- 3 The opposite of painful is _____.
- 4 A _____ neoplasm is called a cancer.
- 5 Tumours which do not invade or metastasize are _____.
- 6 _____ tumours are those which result from the spread of a primary.
- 7 If a cure is not possible, _____ treatment should be given.
- 8 A _____ liver suggests metastasis.

Express your idea.

The most likely clinical diagnosis in the patient (described in Case 55 above) is lymphoma. How would you explain his condition to him?

