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Questions 1–6 introduce the reader to the basics of brain tumors, including:	
• What is a brain tumor?	
• Why are there so many different types of brain tumors?	
• Can any part of the brain have a tumor? Where in the brain do most brain tumors occur? Are there areas of the brain where it is more dangerous to have a tumor?	
<i>Part 2: Diagnosis and Pathology</i>	23
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Questions 7–16 describe common symptoms associated with brain tumors and the diagnosis process:	
• What are the symptoms of brain tumors? Do all brain tumors cause headaches?	
• Why does every doctor I see ask me so many questions about my symptoms, my previous illnesses, and my family history?	
• What is a neurological examination?	
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Questions 17–24 explain the different types and components of neuroimaging:	
• I had a CT scan that was abnormal, but then the doctor also ordered an MRI scan. Why do I need both?	
• How does an MRI work?	
• I have had surgery and radiation therapy for a brain tumor. How often should I have a follow-up MRI scan?	
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Questions 25–34 explain the different types of neurosurgery available and how surgery is performed and its effects on patients:	
• Is surgery necessary to diagnose a brain tumor?	
• What are the potential complications of a neurosurgical procedure?	
• Should I get a second opinion before having an operation?	

Part 5: Radiation Therapy **93**

Questions 35–44 review radiation as a treatment option and how it affects a patient:

- What is radiation therapy? Is radiation therapy given for every type of brain tumor?
- What are the side effects of radiation therapy?
- How does the radiation oncologist decide how much of the brain to radiate if nothing is visible on the MRI?

Part 6: Chemotherapy and Other Drug Therapy **121**

Questions 45–57 discuss how chemotherapy and other drugs attack the brain tumor, as well as their potential effects:

- What is the blood–brain barrier? How does it determine which drugs are used in brain tumor treatment?
- What are the most common chemotherapy drugs used to treat brain tumors? What are their side effects?
- What can I do to prevent or diminish the side effects of chemotherapy?

Part 7: Clinical Trials for Brain Tumor Patients **155**

Questions 58–63 explain what a clinical trial is and how to determine if you are a candidate for the treatments offered, such as:

- What is a clinical trial?
- What do I need to know before I enroll in a study?
- What is the difference between an investigational therapy, an “off-label” drug, a complementary therapy, and an alternative therapy?

Part 8: Complications of Brain Tumors and Their Treatment **175**

Questions 64–70 review possible complications that may occur during or as a result of the treatments for brain tumors:

- Can I expect to have brain damage as a result of surgery, radiation therapy, or other treatment?
- I experience short periods in which I can’t speak. This happens several times a day. I never black out, but my neurologist says that I could be having seizures. Is this common?
- How long do I need to take anticonvulsant medication?

Part 9: Medications Used in Brain Tumor Treatment **191**

Questions 71–75 introduce the different types of medications prescribed to treat brain tumors and their side effects:

- What does dexamethasone do? What are the side effects of dexamethasone?
- What are the side effects of anticonvulsant medication?
- My pharmacist said that there may be a “drug interaction” between some of my medications. What does this mean?

Part 10: Living with a Brain Tumor **203**

Questions 76–88 offer information on how to maintain a happy, productive life while living with a brain tumor, as well as first-hand advice from a brain tumor survivor:

- I have just learned that I have a brain tumor and I'm afraid. Is this common?
- What dietary adjustments do I need to make during treatment? Should I take vitamin or mineral supplements? Can diet protect against recurrence of a brain tumor?
- Fatigue is a big problem for me. I simply don't have the energy to do anything. What can I do about this?

Part 11: Taking Control of Your Future **231**

Questions 89–100 provide information on how to best take control of your prognosis and treatment, as well as your quality of life:

- Are there specific support groups for brain tumor patients? How do I find one?
- What records do I need to keep about my treatment? What is the best way to stay organized?
- My oncologist told me that even though I'm doing well, my tumor will probably come back at some point. He said, "Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst." I'm hoping for the best, but how do I prepare for the worst?

Appendix **263**

The appendix is a list of Websites, organizations, and literature to help brain tumor patients and their families find additional resources on general and specific topics related to brain tumors.

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