A Patient Guide to Brain Tumor Surgery
Before your first visit
Please bring: all imaging, reports, medication and allergy list, list of any medical problems and past surgeries to your visit.

Surgeries for Brain Tumors
Your neurosurgeon will help you decide which surgery is right for you. You may have:

- **Biopsy** – Removes tissue to make a diagnosis
- **Craniotomy** – Removes part or all of the tumor. Also removes tissue to make a diagnosis.

Care Team
A team of experts from the following fields are here to help you at any time: neurosurgery, neurology, oncology, radiation oncology, nursing, social work, case management, chaplaincy, physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.

Before surgery
- Our office will make all pre-operative appointments for you.
- You will meet with an anesthesiologist, have a physical exam, EKG, chest x-ray, and blood work
- Bring a list of all medications with dosages and allergies to this appointment.
- You may need additional imaging shortly before surgery.
- Stop any medications that thin the blood (Coumadin, Advil or Ibuprofen) before surgery.
- Do not eat or drink after midnight the night before surgery.

Day of Surgery
Go to Wang Ambulatory Care Center, Third Floor, Room 309. Bring a book to read and leave all valuables at home.
During Surgery
Surgery can last from a couple of hours to most of the day. Family can wait in the Gray Family Waiting Room (Gray Building, 1st floor – see map) for updates.

After Surgery
• After a biopsy, you will stay on a general care floor for 1-2 nights.
• After a craniotomy, you will spend the night in the ICU.
• You cannot have overnight visitors in the ICU.
• The next day, you will get out of bed, begin to eat food, and be moved to the general care floor.
• Most patients are in the hospital for 3-5 days.

Pain Management
Before leaving the hospital, you will start taking several medications to help relieve pain. You may still have pain, but it should not be very bad. Please call if your pain is not helped with medication.

Frequently asked questions
What are markers?
Markers are small circular stickers placed by the NP the day before surgery. They can be seen on CT and MRI. Your neurosurgeon uses them to find your tumor during surgery.

Please wear a hat or scarf over the markers. They must be left in and will be removed after surgery.

What medications will I take when I go home?
Many patients will leave the hospital taking a steroid, pain relievers, nausea relievers, and anti-seizure medications.

We will lower the steroid and anti-seizure medications as soon as it is safe. Do not suddenly stop taking these medications.

When can I shower?
You can shower as soon as you return home. However, you must wear a shower cap to keep the sutures dry.

Can I cover the incision?
Leave the incision open to air so it can heal. You may cover the wound with a scarf or loose fitting hat if you are in public.

How soon will I have a follow up visit?
You will have an appointment with the nurse practitioner 7-14 days after surgery to make sure your incision is healing and to remove sutures.

Follow up with the neurosurgeon is six weeks after surgery.

Common concerns
Pain near the incision site, nausea, fatigue, and muscle tightness are common and will get better over time.

Additional therapy or treatment may be needed. A personalized plan will be made for you after surgery.

Call 617-726-3779 if you have:
• Headache that continues to get worse
• Headache that does not get better with medication
• Vomiting
• Liquid coming from the nose
• Any questions/concerns

Go to the Emergency Room if you have liquid coming from your incision.