BI-LO Charities Children's Cancer Center

Facts About Neurofibromatosis

Neurofibromatosis (commonly abbreviated **NF**) is a genetically inherited disorder in which tumors (neurofibromas) grow on the nerve tissue. These tumors may be harmless or they may cause serious damage by compressing nerves and other tissues.

The disorder affects all types of nerve cells, including Schwann cells, melanocytes and endoneurial fibroblasts. As elements from these cells multiply excessively throughout the body, they form tumors that can cause bumps under the skin, colored spots, skeletal problems, pressure on spinal nerve roots and other neurological problems.

NF is autosomal dominant, which means that it affects males and females equally and if either parent passes the affected gene to the child, the condition will be present. Therefore, if a parent has neurofibromatosis, his or her children have a 50 percent chance of developing the condition as well.

The severity in affected individuals varies significantly. In around half of cases, there is no other affected family member because a new mutation has occurred.

Neurofibromatosis type 2 (NF2) is characterized by the development of non-malignant tumors along the auditory nerve and the cranial nerve. This is the auditory-vestibular nerve responsible for transmitting sensory information from the inner ear to the brain. Many people with NF2 also experience problems with their eyes and are at risk for central nervous system tumors.