

Pheochromocytoma

Pheochromocytomas are tumors that produce chemicals called catecholamines. These are normal substances in the body, but excess levels cause prominent symptoms of headaches, sweats, anxiety, and palpitations in association with hypertension. The hypertension can be severe and fatal, making it important to diagnose and treat this rare tumor. Most of these tumors are benign, but they can be malignant. Treatment is surgical removal, which is usually curative for benign tumors although there is a risk of recurrence. Malignant tumors have a poor prognosis. About 60% of persons with pheochromocytoma show a persistently high blood pressure with episodic spikes. The other 40% have spikes in blood pressure, but between spikes, they appear healthy with normal BP. Detection of pheochromocytoma requires measurement of levels of catecholamines and catecholamine metabolites. This can be done by blood testing, but a urine collection (*often a 24 hr collection*) is preferred. Testing is best done during a blood pressure spike. Pheochromocytomas usually arise in the adrenal gland (see Cushing's Syndrome), but occasionally can be found elsewhere in the body. In most people, the tumor presents as a single tumor, but occasionally they can be multiple. In addition, pheochromocytomas occasionally are part of a larger problem with the endocrine glands, usually the thyroid and parathyroid glands in the Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndromes (MEN - multiple endocrine neoplasia), and this adds risk to the overall underwriting assessment.

If your client has Pheochromocytoma, please answer the following:

1. Please list date of diagnosis:

Benign vs Malignant _____

Single vs Multiple _____

2. What evaluation was done? Please give date and results.

MRI, CT _____

Urine test

Blood test

3. Is your client on any medications?

yes, please give details

4. Has your client had surgery to remove a Pheochromocytoma?

yes, please give details

5. Has your client smoked cigarettes or any other tobacco products in the last 5 years?

Yes _____

no _____

6. Does your client have any other major health problems (ex: MEN, neurofibromatosis, asthma, cancer, etc.)?

yes, please give details
