

“Tiny Pretty Things” Actor Had Operation to Treat “Lemon-Sized” Brain Tumor

After weeks of seizures, 31-year-old Barton Cowperthwaite was diagnosed with a Stage II glioma, a common type of brain tumor.

November 29, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

Earlier this month, Tiny Pretty Things star Barton Cowperthwaite was diagnosed with a [brain tumor](#) that has not spread to other parts of his body. Last week, the 31-year-old underwent an “incredibly successful operation” to treat the cancer, the actor shared [via Instagram](#).



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Barton Cowperthwaite (@bartonc)

Early November, Cowperthwaite shared that he was diagnosed with a [Stage II glioma](#), a common

type of [tumor](#) that originates in the brain. For two months prior to his diagnosis, he experienced seizures, “the most recent of which landed me in the ER,” Cowperthwaite [shared on Instagram](#).

At that point, a computed tomography (CT) scan detected an abnormality. He then had a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) at another facility where doctors found a “lemon-sized” glioma in his frontal lobe. The actor later discovered that the glioma had been in his brain for [five to 10 years](#).



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Barton Cowperthwaite (@bartonc)

About 33% of all brain tumors are gliomas, and they are categorized into various types, according to [Johns Hopkins Medicine](#). Treatment for a glioma depends on its grade but many people, including Cowperthwaite, undergo surgery that requires a craniotomy, a surgical procedure in which part of the skull is temporarily removed to access the brain. Then a biopsy can be taken to accurately diagnose the tumor.

Cowperthwaite [underwent surgery](#) at NYU Langone and is awaiting the pathology results to determine next steps for treatment.

The actor has been transparent throughout his journey and often expresses gratitude for the support he has received. “Brain surgery isn’t cheap,” he noted in a post in which he announced a [GoFundMe campaign](#) to help raise money to cover his related expenses. Thus far, he has raised \$107,380. On the fundraising page, he writes:

“When I received the diagnosis, I was days away from starting rehearsal for an awesome off

Broadway play. This of course, following a pandemic that rocked my industry, and a strike that postponed a show I was going to be filming over the summer. Trust me, I find it hilariously ironic that I was diagnosed the exact same day the SAG strike ended.

"I was on the fence about starting a fundraiser because I consider myself to be someone who lives in extremely blessed and fortunate circumstances. I still do. But the financial requirements of this situation are very large and my family and I could use all the help we can get. I have been absolutely SHOOK by the outpouring of love and support and want people to know that this will be the best way to contribute while we get everything figured out.

"Anything we're able to raise will go towards: medical expenses not covered by insurance, rent, food, family travel, lodging, recovery, PT, rehab, future scans, at home care, unexpected costs, and more."

Cowperthwaite said he will continue to update followers about his progress but will also be taking time to heal privately with friends and family.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart," he said [via Instagram](#). "Words have no capacity to express my gratitude and I'm just overwhelmed so thank you so much and I love you."

To learn more, click [#Brain Cancer](#), where you'll encounter posts by [blogger Adam Hayden](#), who has glioblastoma, and our [cover profile earlier this year on Catherine Wreford Ledlow](#), an actress who won the 2022 season of The Amazing Race Canada.

For more information on this type of cancer, visit Cancer Health's [Basics on Brain Cancer](#). It reads in part:

What is brain cancer?

Cancer develops when cells grow out of control. There are several types of primary brain cancer (meaning they start in the brain), with the most common being gliomas and glioblastomas, meningiomas, pituitary adenomas, schwannomas and medulloblastomas. Most of these names relate to where in the brain they are located.

Cancer may also arise elsewhere in the body and spread to the brain or spinal cord (the central nervous system), a process known as metastasis. In adults, about half of all brain cancers spread from elsewhere, especially from lung, breast and colon cancers and melanoma. Lymphoma may spread to the brain from elsewhere in the body or start in the brain (primary central nervous system, or CNL, lymphoma).

What are the symptoms of brain cancer?

Many brain tumors do not cause symptoms. Some are found accidentally if brain imaging with a computed tomography (CT) or MRI scan is done for another reason. When symptoms do

occur, they vary depending on which part of the brain or spinal cord is affected. Common symptoms may include:

Headache

Weakness or paralysis

Nausea or vomiting

Clumsiness or lack of coordination

Difficulty walking

Seizures

Changes in vision, hearing, touch or taste

Speech problems

Mood, personality or behavior changes

Mental confusion, trouble concentrating or memory problems.

Many people with brain cancer do not develop symptoms until its late stages, when it is harder to treat.

How is brain cancer diagnosed?

Early detection and treatment of brain cancer increases the likelihood of long-term survival. Diagnosing brain cancer starts with a physical exam and health history. Often, brain imaging with a CT scan will be ordered. This is an imaging technique that uses X-rays to create a three-dimensional map of the brain. Sometimes an MRI scan is done as well. Other tests may be ordered, such as blood and urine tests, to determine what other health issues may be present.

If a tumor is evident from imaging and other tests, a biopsy or tissue sample may be done. Either a small hole is drilled into the skull and a device is inserted to remove a piece of the tumor or more extensive surgery is done in which the whole tumor is removed. A sample from the tumor is tested to determine if it is cancerous.