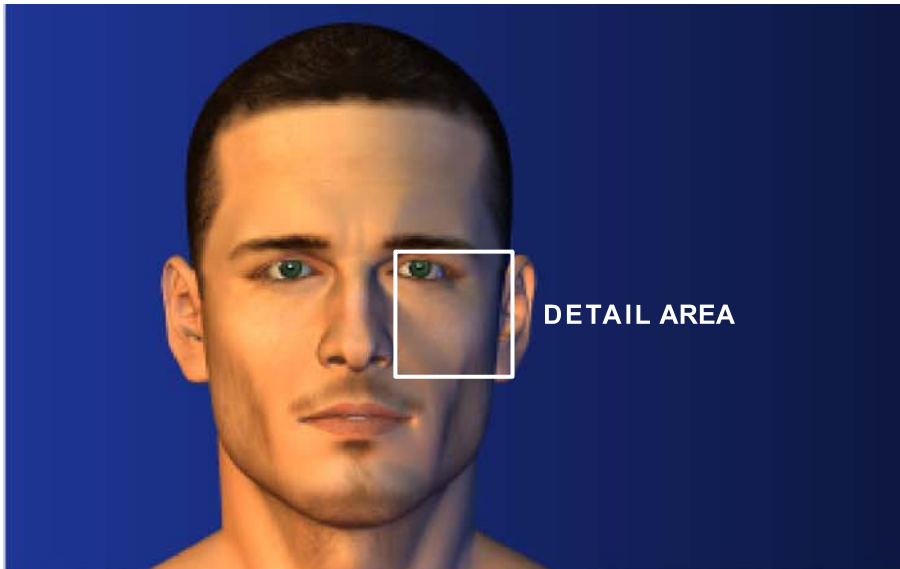


ACOUSTIC NEUROMA



Overview

These benign brain tumors form on a nerve in the middle or inner ear. Acoustic neuromas are usually slow growing and do not spread to surrounding tissue. If left untreated they can grow so large that they press harmfully against surrounding structures, including the brain and other nerves.

How Acoustic Neuromas Form

Acoustic neuromas form within schwann cells, special cells that encase the auditory nerve. Acoustic neuromas grow because a protein that usually controls the size and number of nerve fibers becomes defective and allows these fibers to become too numerous and too large.

Symptoms

Acoustic neuromas generally develop between the ages of 30 and 50, and usually grow on only one side of the head. They can cause tinnitus (ringing in the ear), hearing loss, facial weakness, difficulty swallowing and dizziness.

Treatment

Acoustic neuromas can be treated with surgery and radiation therapy. Treatment options depend on the type, size and characteristics of the tumor and the age and health of the patient.

