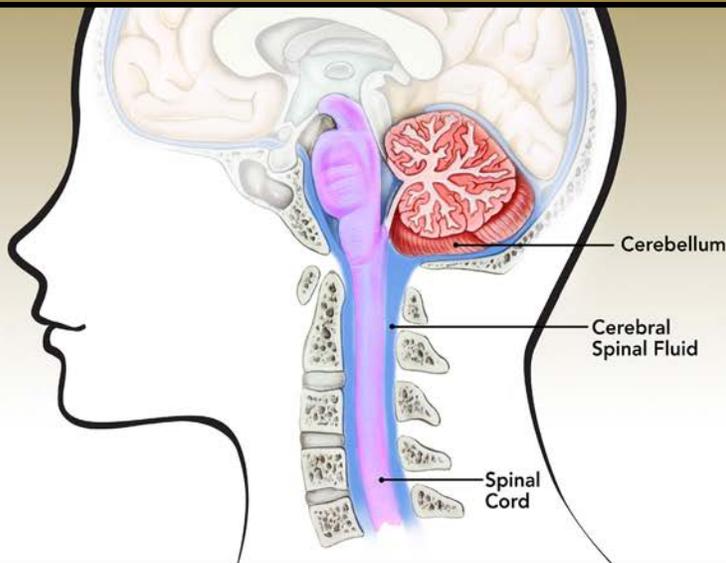
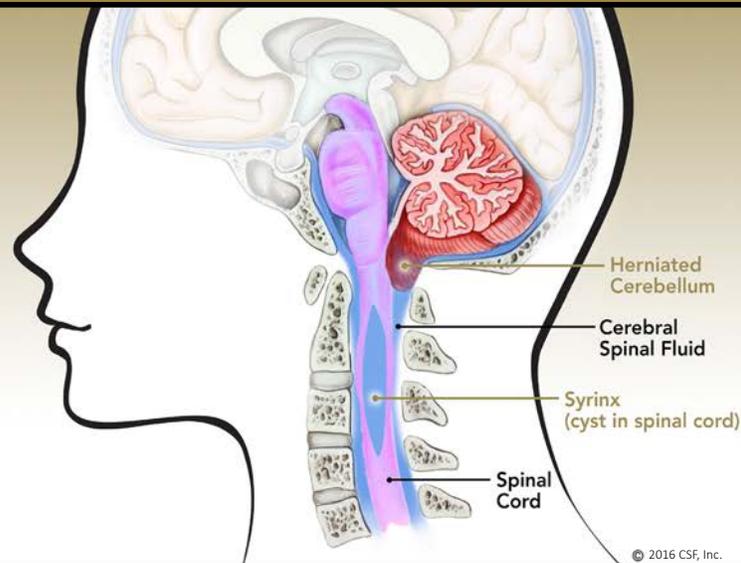


About Syringomyelia



Normal



Syringomyelia

DEFINITION

Syringomyelia (seer-in-go-my-EEL-ya) (SM) occurs when a cavity, or syrinx, is formed inside the spinal cord from a build-up of fluid, which results from a blockage, either from a Chiari malformation, spinal trauma, tumor, or other cause. Syringomyelia can cause stretching and, eventually, permanent injury to nerve fibers.

CAUSES

Often, SM is associated with CM

There is at least a partial blockage of normal CSF circulation in almost all cases

Obstruction of CSF flow is most commonly caused:

- by abnormalities in the base of the skull (CM) or in the spine
- after spinal injury, spinal infections, or spinal surgery (scar tissue)
- in the presence of arachnoid partitions (congenital)
- in the presence of some tumors in the spinal cord

TREATMENT

Currently, the only effective treatment is surgery

Aim of surgery: Decrease the size of the syrinx and relieve the symptoms by treating the cause of the syrinx: Chiari, tumor, etc. Occasionally, direct drainage of the syrinx is needed.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Common
Numbness
Tingling
Pain
Weakness

**these symptoms occur particularly in the arms and legs*

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

MRI will indicate whether or not a patient has SM or any other abnormality

“Screening” MRI of the spine can establish diagnosis of SM

Three components for appropriate diagnosis and treatment of SM:

- patient's history of specific characteristic symptoms
- examination that shows signs consistent with SM
- head and spine MRI demonstrating characteristic anatomy of SM

Important note: *The decision to proceed with surgery should be carefully based on symptoms and neurological findings. If there is any doubt about the significance of the imaging results, tests should be repeated and surgery should be deferred to a later date.*

OUR MISSION: To advance knowledge through research and to educate the medical, allied sciences, and lay community about Chiari malformation, syringomyelia and related conditions.

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