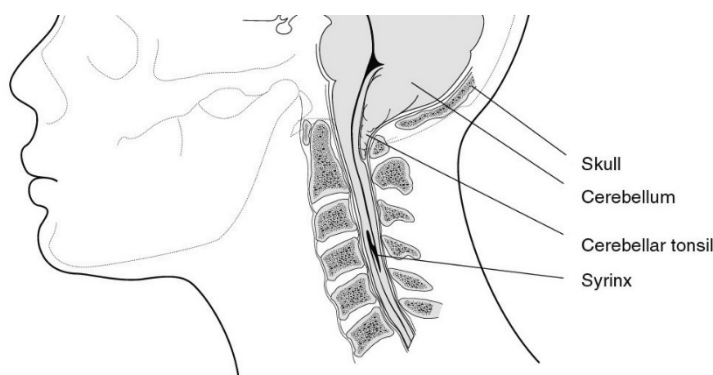


## Chiari I Malformation Surgery

**Chiari malformation** is when the “cerebellar tonsils” in the back part of the brain extend down into the spinal canal. This may change the normal flow of cerebral spinal fluid as it moves from the brain and down the spinal cord. Some people have a spinal cord cyst (an abnormal collection of fluid). This cyst is called a “syrinx.” This syrinx may also cause symptoms.



### Common Symptoms

- Headaches
- Neck, shoulder or arm pain
- Weakness or changes in the feeling in your hands, arms, or legs
- Symptoms that become worse with straining or coughing

### Treatment

Your doctor may suggest surgery to make room for the cerebellar tonsils. Surgery often improves the symptoms or keeps them from getting worse.

Your neurosurgeon will decide the best method of surgery and will go over this during a clinic visit.

After surgery, the normal flow of cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) is restored. Often, the syrinx will go away in a few weeks or months.

### Before Surgery

You will need an exam and lab tests before surgery. Schedule this exam with your primary care provider or with a nurse in our department. Complete this within 30 days of surgery. We may cancel surgery without this exam. Contact your insurance company for any referrals you may need.

### Stop these medicines for two weeks before surgery:

- Aspirin, Excedrin<sup>®</sup>, Ascriptin<sup>®</sup>, and Ecotrin<sup>®</sup>
- Vitamins and herbal supplements
- Ibuprofen, Advil<sup>®</sup>, Motrin<sup>®</sup>, Nuprin<sup>®</sup>, and Aleve<sup>®</sup>

Please call our office if you take:

- Plavix<sup>®</sup>
- Coumadin<sup>®</sup> or Warfarin

You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol<sup>®</sup>), if needed.

**Avoid** smoking and cigarette smoke for **two weeks** before surgery. Smoking delays wound healing. Cigarette smoke contains a poison that lowers the level of oxygen in the blood.

You will be called the afternoon before surgery. The nurses will tell you what time you need to arrive and will give you final details about getting ready.

### Surgery

This surgery may take 3-5 hours. It involves an incision from the middle of the neck to the back of your head.

### **After Surgery**

**Avoid** coughing, lifting, and straining for the next **3 months**. You and your doctor will decide when you should return to school or work.

### **When to Call**

Call if you have any of these symptoms:

- Severe headache
- Fever over 101.5° F
- Redness, swelling or drainage at the incision site
- Nausea or vomiting

### **Who to Call**

Pediatric Neurosurgery Clinic  
**(608) 263-6420**

After hours, nights, and weekend, call the paging operator at **(608) 262-0486**. Ask for the neurosurgeon on call. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 4/2024. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5310