

Brain Aneurysm



Overview

This condition is a bulge that forms in the wall of a weakened artery in the brain. This bulge can leak or rupture, causing a stroke. An aneurysm can be life-threatening.

Causes

An aneurysm is typically caused by a thinning of the arterial wall. This thinning can develop gradually over time. Aneurysms often develop at the base of arterial branches in the brain, because the arteries are weakest at these points.

Symptoms

Aneurysms can cause a wide range of symptoms. A small aneurysm that has not ruptured may not cause noticeable symptoms. A large aneurysm that has not ruptured may cause pain behind an eye. It may impair vision, and may cause numbness or weakness on one side of the face. When an aneurysm ruptures, it often causes a sudden, severe headache. This pain is frequently described as the worst headache of the person's life. A ruptured aneurysm can also cause nausea, stiffness of the neck, sensitivity to light, seizures, confusion and loss of consciousness.

Treatment

Treatment options depend on the size and location of the aneurysm and whether or not it has ruptured. In many cases, an aneurysm can be treated with surgical clipping or coil embolization. Other treatment options include medications, pain relievers, and the insertion of a drainage catheter or shunt. Rehabilitative therapy may be required as a part of recovery from a brain aneurysm.

