

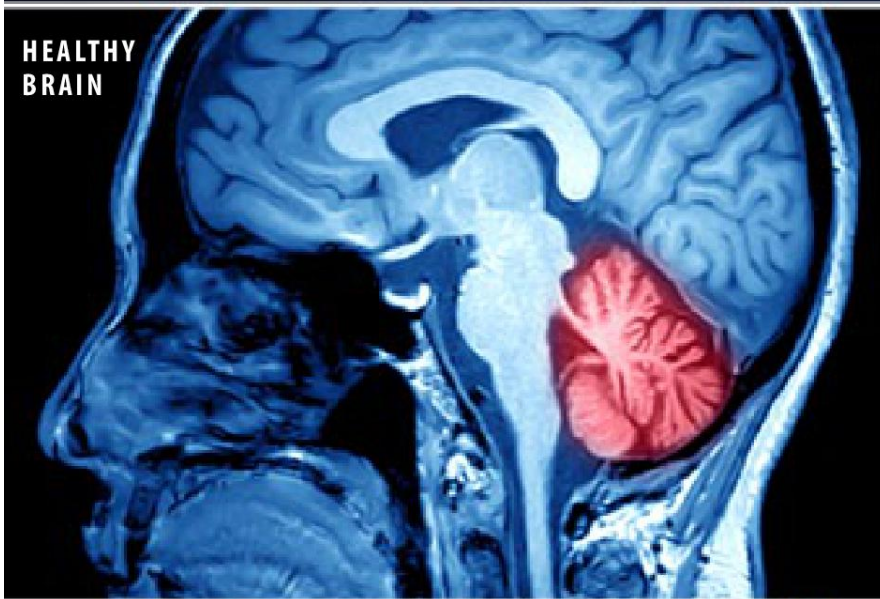


Chiari Malformation (CM)



Cerebellum

HEALTHY
BRAIN



CHIARI
MALFORMATION



Overview

This is a structural problem with the back of the brain. It involves the cerebellum. That's the part of your brain that controls balance. Normally, the cerebellum sits in a space at the base of the skull. It's just above the opening to the spinal canal, called the "foramen magnum." With Chiari malformation, the cerebellum slips down through this opening.

Causes

This condition usually happens as a fetus develops in the womb. It may be linked to a genetic mutation or to other issues. These can cause problems with the development of the skull and brain. It may also develop later in life if you lose a lot of spinal fluid. This can happen because of an injury or an infection.

Symptoms

Chiari malformation can cause symptoms such as neck pain and problems with balance and coordination. It can cause problems with vision, hearing and swallowing. It can cause weakness, numbness and other problems in the arms and legs. And it can cause issues such as headaches, depression and insomnia, among other problems. The symptoms depend on the severity of the malformation. In some people, only a small part of the cerebellum pushes down through the hole. That may not cause any symptoms. In severe cases, much more of the brain's tissue pushes through. In the most severe cases, this causes death.

Treatment

Treatment options depend on your needs. If your malformation is mild, medications may help. If your malformation is more severe, you may benefit from surgery. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for you.