

SEPTEMBER IS CHIARI AWARENESS MONTH

Skull Base

A lot of Chiari research focuses on the abnormalities of the skull base that most Chiari patients have. Did you know that these bones don't fuse until people are in their mid-teens? To allow for growth, there are several junctions in this area where the bones are initially connected with cartilage. As a teenager, these important bone segments start to fuse (earlier for girls than boys), but they don't usually become completely bone until about 20 years of age. What goes wrong, and when, in how Chiari patients skulls develop, and how this relates to the herniation of the cerebellar tonsils, isn't entirely clear. One reason for this is that we tend to only get images after someone is already experiencing significant symptoms. It would be fascinating, but of course impractical, to get images starting in childhood from someone we know will develop symptoms as an adult.