

What Is Chiari Malformation?

A serious neurological disorder where the bottom part of the brain, the cerebellum, descends out of the skull and crowds the spinal cord, putting pressure on both the brain and spine and causing many symptoms.

Someone with Chiari may not be able to:

- Bend over
- Lift heavy objects
- Stand or sit for any length of time
- Walk very far
- Engage in strenuous activities
- Drive a long distance
- Work on a computer without pain
- Be in a noisy environment
- Perform household chores

Chiari Affects Everyone Differently

Chiari has a wide ranging, diverse set of symptoms and affects everyone differently. Research shows that 95% of patients experience at least 5 symptoms.

Affects about 1 in 1,000 people

10 things to know about Chiari

Most common symptom is severe headache, usually in the back of the head, and made worse by activities such as straining, coughing, sneezing, or bending over

Can cause many additional symptoms, including balance problems, pain and weakness in the arms and legs, and trouble speaking and swallowing, to name a few

Diagnosed through a combination of MRIs (Magnetic Resonance Imaging), a neurological exam, and other tests

If symptoms are bad enough, or getting worse, a decompression surgery is usually performed

Surgery, performed by a neurosurgeon, involves removing part of the skull and spine, and sometimes sewing a patch into the natural covering of the brain

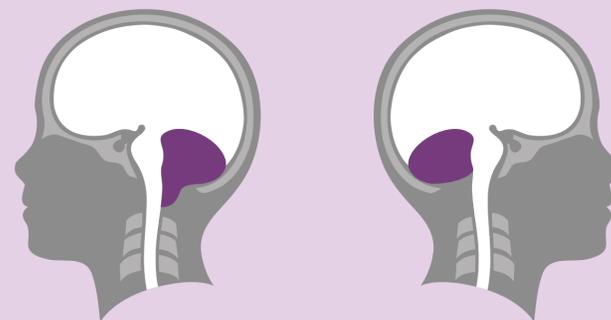
While precise data is not available, about 50% of patients become symptom free after surgery, another 20%-30% improve significantly, and about 20% experience no relief or get worse

In some people, it can lead to another serious condition, known as syringomyelia, where a fluid-filled cyst develops inside the spinal cord

It is believed that the malformation is congenital (people are born with it); symptoms can develop at any age, but commonly become noticeable either in childhood or in a person's early 30's

Many doctors are not familiar with the condition, so people often go years without a proper diagnosis

What Does Chiari Malformation Look Like?



I HAVE CHIARI

I DON'T HAVE CHIARI

What Are the Most Common Symptoms?

