

SHUNTS AND THEIR SYMPTOMS

What is a shunt?

Hydrocephalus is usually treated by insertion of a shunt. A shunt is a device, which is designed to drain excess cerebrospinal fluid from the brain and carry it to other parts of the body.

A one way valve is used, which usually sits outside the skull, but beneath the skin, somewhere behind the ear.

What are the symptoms of a malfunctioning shunt?

Although a shunt works generally well, it may stop working if it disconnects, becomes blocked or it is outgrown. If this happens, the CSF fluid will begin to accumulate again and a number of physical symptoms will develop. It is important to get medical attention if any of the following symptoms develop.

- Headache
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Irritability and personality changes
- Lethargy and drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Changes in vision
- Seizures

Shunt revision

As a shunt is often inserted in infancy, at some time, most adults with Hydrocephalus will have had a shunt revision. Shunts can become blocked, disconnected or outgrown by the person. A shunt revision is surgery to the shunt to 'fix' the problem if there have been symptoms experienced.

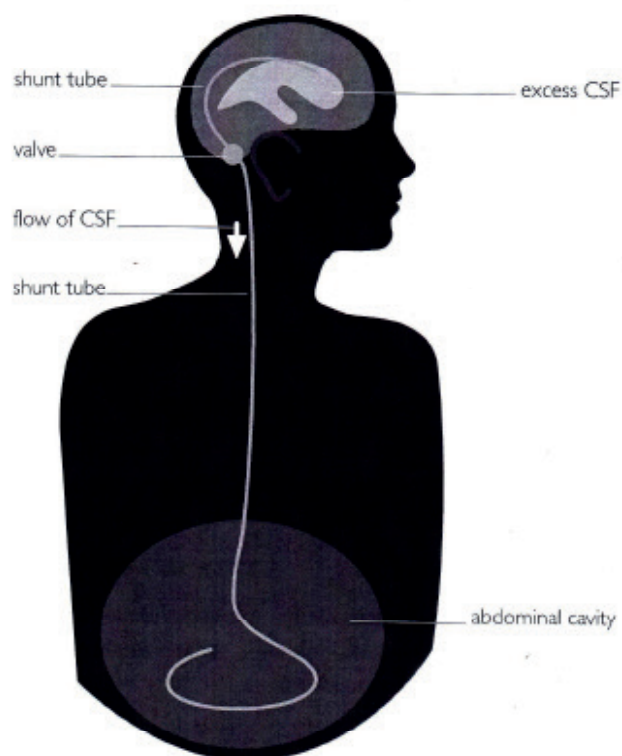


Diagram Sourced –
The Brain & Spine Foundation,
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