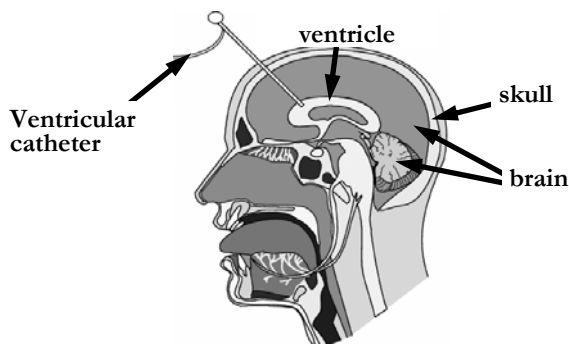


Ventriculostomy

About Your Brain

The brain controls thoughts and actions and is protected by hard bone called the skull. Inside the skull are the brain, blood and cerebral spinal fluid (CSF). Because the skull is like a closed box, there is a careful balance of blood and cerebral spinal fluid so there is not pressure on the brain. CSF protects the brain by acting like a cushion. It is formed in the ventricles and is reabsorbed by the body.



About Ventriculostomy

If the brain should swell due to injury or defect, a very small drain is placed into the ventricle. This allows the doctor to drain off the extra cerebral spinal fluid and reduce the amount of pressure placed on the brain. This drainage may be clear or look bloody. The name of this procedure is ventriculostomy. It can be done in the operating room or at bedside by your neurosurgeon.

- Follow up CAT scans may be ordered by the doctor.
- Ventriculostomy are usually in less than two weeks, depending upon the patient's progress.

Reasons for a Ventriculostomy Monitoring ICP (intracranial pressure or pressure in the head)—

When there is an injury to the brain the brain may swell and cause more damage. It is important that the neurosurgeon knows how much pressure is on the brain so he may decide the best way to treat the patient.

Brain Surgery—

The brain may swell after brain surgery. The doctor may insert the ventriculostomy to drain extra cerebral spinal fluid until the brain heals enough to take over the job.

Hydrocephalus—

- A blockage in the cerebral spinal fluid drainage system somewhere in the brain. It stops the cerebral spinal fluid from draining from the head.
- Caused by an injury, a brain infection, the aging process, or from a problem at birth.
- In patients that have had a shunt placed and it failed, a ventriculostomy may be placed for a short time to control the amount of CSF until the problem with the shunt can be addressed.

