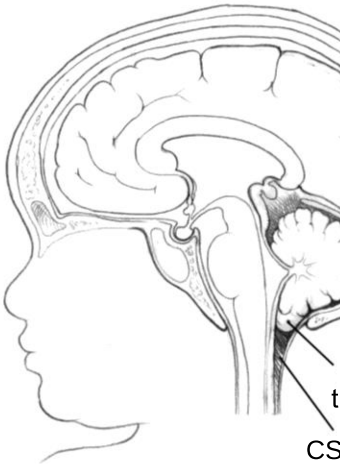
NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S®
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

Helping Hand™ *Health Education for Patients and Families*

Chiari Malformation Type 1

Chiari malformation type 1 is a condition where a bottom portion of the brain (cerebellar tonsils) extends into the spinal canal. This may block the flow of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) to and from the brain (Picture 1).

Chiari malformation type 1 is the most common type and is often present at birth but not found until symptoms arise.



Picture 1
Cerebellum in the spinal canal

Symptoms

Most people with Chiari malformation type 1 have no symptoms and do not need treatment. If your child is having symptoms or has certain findings on a magnetic resonance image (MRI), surgery may be recommended.

Your child may have one or more of these symptoms:

- Headache
- Neck pain
- Trouble swallowing
- Scoliosis
- Weakness in hands or arms
- Numbness and tingling of the hands or feet
- Speech changes like a hoarse voice
- Snoring or pauses in breathing while sleeping

Tests

Your child will have an MRI of their brain and spine. They may need to have bloodwork done before surgery.

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Before Surgery

- The nurse will call you to ask you questions about your child's health.
- The nurse will tell you when to stop giving your child food and liquids, when to arrive at the hospital, and the time of the surgery.
- Do not chew gum, or eat cough drops or hard candy. If your child has been chewing gum, surgery will be delayed 2 hours from the time the gum is spit out. If the gum has been swallowed, surgery will be delayed up to 8 hours from the time it was swallowed.
- Give your child a bath and wash their hair the night before or the morning of surgery.
- Tell the doctor or health care provider about any medicine or supplements your child is taking. They will let you know if you should give them on the day of surgery.

During the Hospital Stay

- The average hospital stay is 3 to 5 days.
- Your child will get clear liquids after surgery. Regular food will be added slowly.
- For pain, your child will be given acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) and stronger pain medicine if needed. Stool softeners may also be given.
- Your child will be able to get up and walk when they feel ready. Often a physical therapist will help.

Going Home

Your child will be able to go home when:

- Pain is controlled with oral medicine.
- They're eating and drinking without throwing up.
- They can get out of bed and walk to the bathroom and in the hall.
- Family is comfortable caring for them at home.