

MORE FACTS ABOUT HYDROCEPHALUS

1. First identified in ancient Egyptian medical literature about 5000 years ago. Hydrocephalus is a condition where the normal flow of Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF), produced in the ventricles is interrupted (either by obstruction or a failure of the body to re-absorb the CSF) causing intracranial pressure to increase and the ventricle to enlarge.
2. By some estimates hydrocephalus may be the most prevalent neurological condition known to medical science, but exact numbers are hard to come by since no one keeps data on adults with hydrocephalus. Estimates set the number of individuals (children and adults) with hydrocephalus between .75 -1.5 million.
3. According to National Institute of Health hydrocephalus affects one in every 500 live births making hydrocephalus more common than Down's syndrome or Deafness. Hydrocephalus is the leading cause of brain surgery for children in the United States!
4. Over the past 15-20 years the number of adults diagnosed with Hydrocephalus has skyrocketed. The reason for this change is more a case of adults being diagnosed correctly than any increase in the prevalence of the condition.
5. Adults 50 and over are the fastest growing segment of the population to be diagnosed with a condition known as Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus (NPH). NPH while not new looks a lot like other conditions that effect older adults (Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and Dementia) in the early stages making a correct diagnosis difficult.
6. There are 2 types of Hydrocephalus: *Non-Communicating* and *Communicating*.
 - a. **Non-Communicating Hydrocephalus** occurs when there is an obstruction in the flow of the CSF within the ventricular system. The most common reason for this interruption is a blockage in the fluid duct (Aqueduct of Sylvius) between the 3rd and 4th ventricles. But, there can be many other reasons why the fluid flow may be interrupted.
 - b. **Communicating Hydrocephalus** is a type of hydrocephalus where CSF is allowed to flow freely through the ventricular system of the brain. Hydrocephalus in this case is caused because the fluid cannot be re-absorbed properly.
7. Hydrocephalus is generally considered to be Idiopathic (No known cause) and isolated generically.
8. There are at least 50 contributing conditions that can cause Hydrocephalus.
9. The most common treatment for Hydrocephalus is to surgically implant a shunt to drain the excess fluid to another part of the body where it can be absorbed. If the patient is deemed a candidate, an Endoscopic Third Ventriculostomy (ETV) can be performed where a hole is made in the floor of 3th ventricle to make a new path for the CSF to be absorbed (and discarded) by the body.
10. If left untreated, symptoms will usually get worse over time which can lead to permanent brain damage and even death.

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11. There are no medications that have shown much promise in controlling the production CSF over a long period of time.