

**Office for Genetics
and
Children with Special Health Care Needs**

Hydrocephalus Fact Sheet

What is Hydrocephalus?

- Hydrocephalus is sometimes known as “water on the brain”
- Cerebrospinal (“spinal”) fluid normally circulates around the brain and spine. In hydrocephalus this system gets blocked at some point and there is build up of fluid

What is the cause of Hydrocephalus?

- Problem in the structure of the brain or spine.
- The cause of this abnormal structure is usually not known, but possibilities include genetics, bleeding, or infection

Signs and Symptoms

- Unusually large head size
- Vomiting, sleepiness, irritability
- Downward deviation of the eyes (sun setting)
- Sometimes seizures
- Sometimes learning disabilities or developmental delay

Is there any treatment for Hydrocephalus?

- Surgery to put in a shunt system.
- Shunt System – A shunt system consists of a valve that opens when pressure increases, a pump that moves the fluid and tubing that carries the pumped fluid to another place where it can be absorbed in the body, usually the abdomen.

Support Groups/Resources

- Hydrocephalus Center
www.patientcenters.com
1-800-998-9938
- Hydrocephalus Association
www.hydroassoc.org
1-888-598-3789
- Kennedy Krieger Institute
<http://www.kennedykrieger.org>
443-923-9200
- March of Dimes
www.marchofdimes.com
1-410-546-2241
- Office for Genetics and Children with Special Health Care Needs
<http://fha.maryland.gov/genetics/bdris.cfm>
1-800-638-8864
- The Parents' Place Of Maryland
www.ppm.org
410- 768-9100