Chiari Malformation

Chiari Malformation(CM) causes brain tissue to settle into the spinal canal. There are four types of CM.

- Type 1 is most common. It can go unnoticed until problems start, usually with headaches in young adults.
- Type 2 is present at birth and always involves a form of spina bifida. Part of the spinal cord pushes through the spine and is exposed. Spina bifida usually causes paralysis of the legs.
- Type 3 is more severe because it involves more brain tissue.
- Type 4 is the most severe because the brain does not develop correctly.

Adults and adolescents who are unaware they have Type 1 CM may have headaches that are located in the back of the head and get worse with coughing or straining. If more brain tissue is involved, problems may include dizziness, trouble with balance, and vision issues. Diagnosis is made by an MRI.

TREATMENT

Babies may need surgery to repair spina bifida. Medications may be used to control pain. Some adults with CM may benefit from surgery for which the goal is to keep the malformation from getting worse.

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