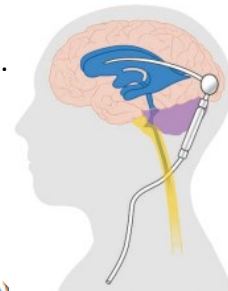


A shunt that stops working can cause the same symptoms as untreated hydrocephalus. Individuals and families need to be on alert for signs and symptoms so a shunt failure can be detected, appropriate action taken and emergency situations avoided.



What are the symptoms?

INFANTS:

- head enlargement
- fontanel (soft spot) is bulging when baby is upright and quiet
- prominent scalp veins appear unnaturally full
- fever (infection)
- vomiting (especially projectile)
- irritability
- sleepiness
- downward deviation of the eyes (sunset eyes)
- seizures

TODDLERS:

- head enlargement caused by enlarged ventricles
- headache*
- vomiting (especially projectile)
- irritability and tiredness
- visual disturbances: blurred or double vision
- loss of previous cognitive or motor abilities, delayed development in walking and talking, or poor coordination or balance
- seizures
- lethargy/listlessness/sleepiness
- bowel and bladder incontinence
- change in personality, unable to concentrate

OLDER CHILDREN:

- headache*
- vomiting (especially projectile)
- visual disturbances: blurred or double vision
- personality change
- loss of coordination or balance
- seizures
- tiredness or difficulty staying awake
- difficulty waking up from sleep
- irritability
- incontinence
- impairment of mental or motor performance
- decline in academic or work performance



YOUNG AND MIDDLE-AGED ADULTS:

- chronic headaches *
- incontinence
- headache unrelieved by pain medication
- visual disturbances, fainting
- gait disturbances: clumsiness, difficulty walking on uneven surfaces and stairs
- cognitive problems: dependent on lists, decline in academic or work performance.

** Note: The headaches experienced by toddlers, children and adults are often at the front of the head on both sides. They are generally severe upon waking in the morning or following a nap, and may be relieved by sitting up.*



SHUNT FAILURES ARE MEDICAL EMERGENCIES!

If you are experiencing any symptoms related to hydrocephalus, seek immediate medical attention as the condition can become life-threatening.