

LEARN MORE ABOUT VENTRICULOMEGALY

WHAT IS VENTRICULOMEGALY?

Ventriculomegaly refers to an enlargement of the lateral ventricles of the brain. The lateral ventricles are the spaces that are normally found in each side of the brain and are filled with cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) which cushions the brain inside the skull and is also found in the spinal canal. The ventricles of the baby's brain are routinely measured on prenatal ultrasound, and the typical width of each lateral ventricle is usually less than 10 millimeters (mm). Therefore, a measurement of 10 mm or greater is typically considered to be above the normal range and is called ventriculomegaly.

Depending on how much extra fluid is there, ventriculomegaly may be referred to as mild, moderate, or severe.

WHAT CAUSES VENTRICULOMEGALY?

The increased amount of fluid in the lateral ventricles may be due to a block in the circulation of fluid, an overproduction of fluid, or an underlying concern of brain development. There are many causes of ventriculomegaly including a chromosome condition, a genetic syndrome, other structural issues in the brain, or an infection. The likelihood of these conditions may depend on several factors, including the biological mother's age, the gestational age, exposures during pregnancy, prior pregnancy history, and family history. For some cases of ventriculomegaly, a cause is never determined.

CAN VENTRICULOMEGALY CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR THE PREGNANCY?

Each case of ventriculomegaly is unique and the exact prognosis will depend on several factors, including the amount of fluid seen, the cause of fluid build-up, and the presence or absence of any other ultrasound findings. Some pregnancies with mild ventriculomegaly may not require any changes to the delivery plan. Other pregnancies with ventriculomegaly may need to be delivered in a hospital that offers intensive care and pediatric neurosurgery, if needed. The effects of ventriculomegaly in infancy can vary: some babies have symptoms of irritability or unusual sleepiness, poor feeding, and developmental delays. Ventriculomegaly can also cause learning or intellectual disabilities. The chance for these concerns and the degree of severity is often difficult or impossible to predict during pregnancy.

Your healthcare team may recommend additional ultrasounds to measure the fluid and reassess the brain later in pregnancy. A fetal magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) may be offered to examine the structures of the brain more closely. Your doctor may also arrange for you to meet specialists who will be involved in your baby's care after delivery.

DO I NEED TO CONSIDER ADDITIONAL TESTING?

Ultrasounds



Based on your ultrasound and other testing results, your genetic counselor and/or prenatal care provider may discuss the specific concerns for your pregnancy. You may be offered genetic screening tests (such as non-invasive prenatal testing [NIPT]) and diagnostic procedures (such as amniocentesis) to evaluate for chromosome conditions or genetic syndromes that may affect the prognosis. Genetic testing in pregnancy is always optional. Some families may find certain tests helpful for their preparation and decision-making, while other families may not want additional information or may not be comfortable with testing. It is important to know that there are no tests available to detect all health concerns.

Non-Invasive
Prenatal Testing
(NIPT)



Diagnostic Testing



WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

If you have additional questions or concerns about this ultrasound finding, please don't hesitate to contact your genetic counselor and/or prenatal care provider. Your healthcare team is here to help you during pregnancy.

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