

Cerebral Cavernous Malformation (CCM)



Overview

This is a mass of enlarged blood vessels in your brain or spinal cord. Pockets in the mass slow down or even trap blood. This can lead to blood clots, or to a leaking of blood we call a "hemorrhage."

Causes

What causes a CCM? In most cases, we don't know. If you have just one, it may have no clear cause. But some CCMs have a genetic link. This is especially true for people who have multiple CCMs. And, a CCM can form after you have radiation therapy in your brain.

Symptoms

What are the symptoms of a CCM? Well, you may not have any symptoms. You can have a cavernous malformation and not even know it. But if your CCM causes a blood clot or a hemorrhage, you can have a wide range of serious problems. These depend on what part of your brain is affected. They can include things like severe headaches, balance difficulties, speech or vision problems, and seizures. This can be life threatening.

Treatment

Treatment depends on your needs. If your CCM isn't causing problems, your doctor may suggest monitoring. If you're having certain symptoms, medications may help. Or, you may need surgery. Your healthcare provider will create a plan that's right for you.

