

Fetal Medicine Unit

Ventriculomegaly

What does this mean?

In the brain there are five fluid-filled holes called ventricles. Ventricles make, and are filled with, cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds and moves around the brain and spinal cord.

There are 2 such ventricles, one on either side of your baby's brain called lateral ventricles that are routinely measured during the mid-trimester anomaly scan (around 20 weeks).

The normal width of each of the two lateral ventricles is up to 10mm. If the sonographer finds that one or both of these ventricles appear larger than 10mm then this is called ventriculomegaly. Ventriculomegaly occurs in about 1% of babies. Up to 12mm is called mild, up to 15mm is moderate and more than 15mm is severe.

What causes ventriculomegaly?

In most babies with ventriculomegaly this is a normal variation and after further investigations we can reassure you of this.

Other causes of ventriculomegaly include:

- Infections such as toxoplasmosis and cytomegalovirus
- Underlying anomalies in the brain or obstruction
- Underlying chromosomal or genetic anomalies
- Bleeding in the brain which is rare

What happens if I am told my baby has ventriculomegaly?

You will be referred to the Fetal Medicine Unit (FMU) at University Hospital Coventry. In the FMU the Consultant will perform a detailed ultrasound scan of your baby. This is to look for any structural anomalies in your baby's brain or other areas.



Patient Information

You will be offered a blood test to rule out certain infections that can lead to ventriculomegaly.

You will be offered further invasive testing called amniocentesis, which involves taking a sample of the amniotic fluid around your baby. This is to look for problems with the number or structure of your baby's chromosomes. This will be discussed in more detail at your appointment.

Later in the pregnancy you may be offered an MRI to look in detail at your baby's brain structure.

You will have regular ultrasound scans to monitor for changes in size of your baby's lateral ventricles.

What does this mean for when my baby is born?

The outcome for your baby will depend on factors such as if there is underlying cause, or the severity of the condition. We will involve the baby doctors who may want to have a discussion with you about further management plan.

It is difficult to provide parents with reliable figures regarding the chance of a neurological problem after birth in a baby diagnosed with ventriculomegaly during pregnancy. Although there is still insufficient data, research indicates that the risk of a neurological impairment is not higher than 10% when the ventriculomegaly is mild and isolated. This is about the same as the rest of the population.

Please call the Fetal Medicine Contact number on 02476966572.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format please contact 02476966572 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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