

Shunt Malfunction

A guide to symptoms and suggested action for **EMPLOYERS**

One of a series of fact sheets produced by the Family Support Service

Signs of acute shunt malfunction or blockage may include:

- Vomiting or nausea
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Photophobia (sensitivity to light) + other visual disturbances
- Drowsiness
- Fits

If someone with a shunt (or who has had Hydrocephalus treated by 3rd ventriculostomy) displays all or some of the above:

1. Ask employee for his/her shunt alert card if they have one and look for name of Neurosurgeon. Phone Neurosurgical Unit and speak to Ward Sister or Neurosurgical Registrar. Do **NOT** leave message with ward clerk or junior.
2. Inform next of kin.
3. It may be necessary to arrange transport to Neurosurgical Unit. Do **NOT** allow employee to be transported to local district hospital (unless unconscious or very ill).

ANYONE WITH SHUNT BLOCKAGE OR MALFUNCTION OF 3RD VENTRICULOSTOMY NEEDS TO BE SEEN AT A SPECIALIST NEUROSURGICAL UNIT WITHIN 4 HOURS OF ACUTE SYMPTOMS DEVELOPING

Shunt malfunction may present as a chronic condition (ie over some time-weeks or even months)

If an employee with Hydrocephalus presents with:

- Fatigue
- General malaise
- Visuo-perceptual problems
- Behaviour changes
- Decline in academic or work performance
- Being just "not right"

THE SITUATION NEEDS TO BE DISCUSSED

Do not assume that someone else will tell them or that they will necessarily notice "vague" symptoms.

Everyone with Hydrocephalus needs to be well hydrated and have access to clear fluids (not fizzy drinks or any drink containing caffeine) especially in hot weather, after exercise or if involved in heavy/manual work.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Family Support Workers at:

Scottish Spina Bifida Association - Family Support Service

Address: The Dan Young Building, 6 Craighalbert Way, Cumbernauld, G68 0LS • Tel: 01236 794516 • Fax: 01236 736435

Lo-Call Helpline: 08459 11 11 12 • E-mail: familysupport@ssba.org.uk • Web: www.ssba.org.uk

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