Shunt Care

Whether you’ve had a shunt since you were a child or your shunt is new, you must manage and care for it throughout your life.

Reporting Problems
Shunt malfunctions can happen at any age. Shunt infections also can occur, usually within six months of a shunt operation.

Symptoms of a shunt problem can include:

- Persistent headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- New seizures, or an increase in seizures
- Changes in vision
- Changes in sleep
- Irritability or changes in behavior
- Stomach pains or abnormal constipation
- Tiredness
- Changes in speech
- Weakness, numbness or tingling in extremities
- Changes (including redness, swelling or heat) at the surgical incision or in areas of the body above the shunt’s tubing
- Unexplained fever within six months of a shunt operation

If you experience any of the above problems, immediately call Telehealth Nursing at 651-229-3890.

Follow-Up Appointments

Neurosurgery
It’s important to follow up with your neurosurgery provider every 1-2 years. This provider might require that you have X-ray or Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) exams before your appointment.

Eye Doctor
You also should have a yearly appointment with your eye doctor. Be sure to mention you have a shunt, so your eye doctor can check for papilledema (swelling in the eye, a possible symptom of a shunt malfunction). Please bring the results from your most recent eye doctor visit to your appointment with your neurosurgery provider.