

A shunt malfunction means that your child's shunt is not working properly. You may notice one or more of these signs and symptoms during a shunt malfunction:

An infant may

- Be irritable or fussy for no known reason.
- Throw up.
- Have a bulging or a rounded soft spot.
- Sleep more than normal.
- Have swelling around the shunt site or shunt tubing.
- Have an increase in head size.
- Be unable to look straight ahead and only look down.

A toddler may

- Have changes in mood, personality or behavior.
- Throw up
- Have a headache. Look for pain behaviors because young children can't always tell us they are in pain.
- Sleep more than normal.
- Have swelling around the shunt site or shunt tubing.

A school age child may

- Throw up
- Have a headache or vision changes.
- Sleep more than normal.
- Have a hard time thinking or understanding.
- Have changes in mood, personality or behavior.
- Have lower grades in school.
- Have swelling around the shunt site or shunt tubing.



Signs and symptoms of a shunt infection

Your child is at risk of shunt infection for up to six months after surgery. Most often, shunt infections will occur within the first weeks after surgery. Please call the neurosurgery office if you think your child may have a shunt infection.

Symptoms of shunt infection may include:

- Fever 101°F (38.3°C) or higher.
- Redness, drainage or increased swelling around incision(s).
- Headache

ALERT: If you are worried that your child may have a shunt malfunction or a shunt infection, call your child's neurosurgery office to discuss his/her signs and symptoms with a provider.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.