

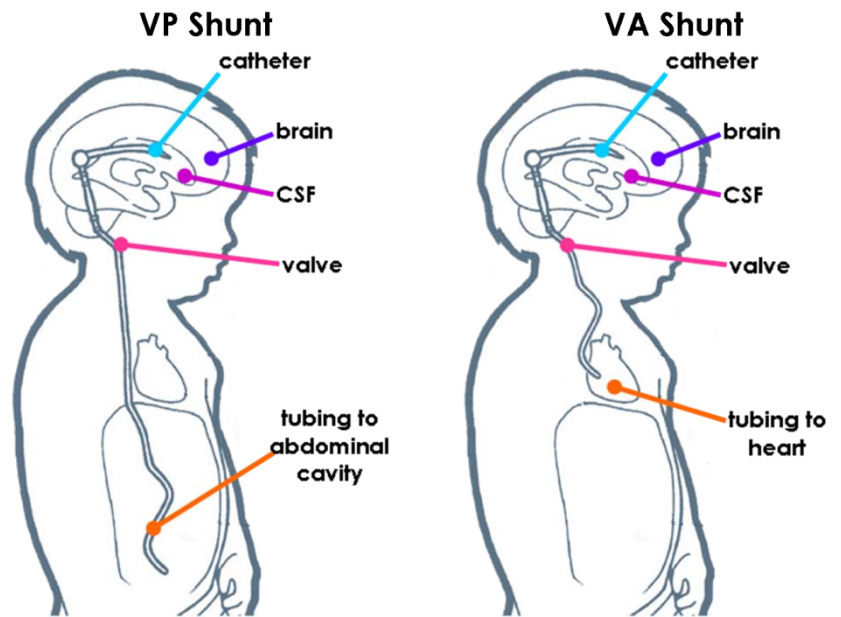
What is a Shunt?



A Mechanical Device Which Transports CSF

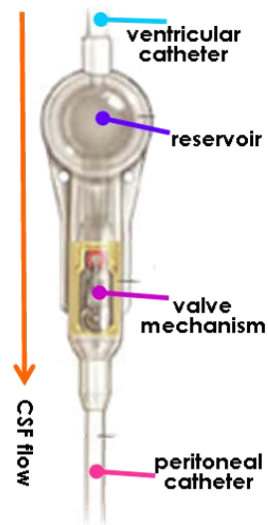
A shunt is a mechanical device designed to transport the excess CSF from or near the point of obstruction to a re-absorption site and it is implanted under the skin.

A shunt is a tube that diverts the excess fluid from the expanded brain cavity (ventricle) to another part of the body. This procedure re-directs the fluid to another body cavity such as the abdomen. This is called a VP shunt (Ventricular-Peritoneal shunt). In some cases, the fluid is diverted one of the chambers of the heart. This is called a VA shunt (Ventricular-Atrial shunt).



A shunt is usually composed of three parts: a silicone catheter that enters the enlarged ventricle; a one-way valve that only allows flow away from the ventricle; and tubing which enters the cavity that is to receive the fluid. Each valve is designed to operate at a set pressure, so that a high-pressure valve will allow less fluid to flow through it than a low-pressure valve. A variety of valve designs are available and efforts are constantly underway to improve them.

Newborns and infants often are implanted with a fixed shunt, when they are older and in need of a revision, the doctor may then decide to replace the valve and reservoir unit with a programmable one.



Although, shunting systems represent a major medical breakthrough, some are still left vulnerable to complications, most notably obstruction or infection of the shunt. However, most people diagnosed with Hydrocephalus live full and active lives.