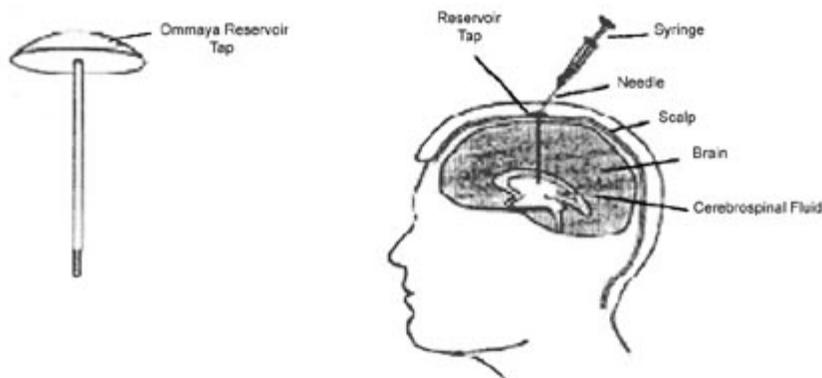


Patient Care Services
300 Pasteur Drive
Stanford, CA 94305

Ommaya Reservoir Patient Education

What is an Ommaya Reservoir?

The Ommaya Reservoir is a device through which fluids can be put into, or removed, from around the brain. There are two parts to the Ommaya; a small plastic dome-like container or port that is put under the scalp and a small tube (or catheter) coming off from the dome. The end of the tube is directed into a open space in the brain called a ventricle. The cells in the ventricles produce Cerebral Spinal Fluid (CSF). The CSF flows around the brain and the spinal cord to provide a protective cushion and nutrients. .



What is the purpose of the Ommaya Reservoir?

The Ommaya Reservoir is used to take out a sample of the fluid or give chemotherapy directly into the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord. This method of giving chemotherapy is called intrathecal chemotherapy. Intrathecal chemotherapy is administered so the drug(s) can get directly into the area around the brain and spinal cord where cancer cells may be. There is a network of blood vessels surrounding the brain that act as a screen (blood-brain barrier). This blood-brain barrier does not allow most chemotherapy to get from the bloodstream to the brain and spinal cord. Intrathecal chemotherapy is used to by-pass this barrier, allowing chemotherapy to reach cancer cells.

How is the Ommaya Reservoir put in?

A surgeon will perform this surgical procedure in the hospital under general anesthesia. Your head will be shaved in the area that the reservoir is to be placed. The Ommaya Reservoir is placed under the skin on the head and then the tube or catheter is positioned through the skull into a ventricle in the brain.

Things to watch for immediately after the Ommaya is placed:

- Keep the area dry until the stitches (or staples) are removed.
- Watch for signs of infection such as redness, tenderness or drainage at the incision site, fever greater than 100.5, headache with or without vomiting, or neck stiffness.

After the Ommaya Reservoir is put in you will have a small bump on your head. This is normal. Once the surgical incision from the Ommaya Reservoir is healed, no special care is needed for the site. You can participate in normal activities. You may wash your hair.

What can I expect when my Ommaya Reservoir is used?

Intrathecal chemotherapy can be given in the hospital or the clinic. The skin over the Ommaya is cleaned and a small needle is inserted into the reservoir. A fluid sample is taken or chemotherapy is given, and the needle is removed. The needle stick site is covered with a band aid. Side effects of this procedure may include: headache, nausea/vomiting, stiff neck, pressure or pain from needle insertion. If there is difficulty withdrawing fluid from the reservoir, you may need to have an MRI to check placement. The MRI will show if the Ommaya is in the right place or if it needs to be moved by the surgeon.

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