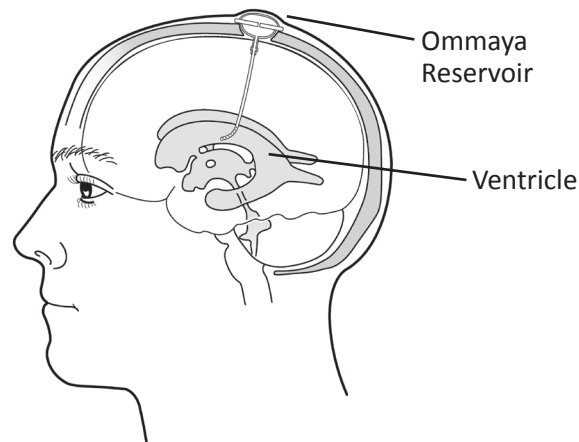


## Ommaya Reservoir

### What is an Ommaya reservoir?

An Ommaya reservoir is a small plastic dome-like device that connects to a small tube. The reservoir is placed under the skin in the scalp. The tube leads to a fluid-filled chamber in the brain. This chamber is called a ventricle. The ventricle creates cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).

*If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your doctor or nurse.*



### What is cerebrospinal fluid?

Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) is a liquid that flows around the brain and spinal cord. CSF cushions and nourishes the brain.

### What is the purpose of an Ommaya reservoir?

Most often, the Ommaya reservoir is used in cancer treatment. It can be used to:

- Place medicine directly into the CSF of the brain and spinal cord.
- Take a CSF sample to look for abnormal cells.
- Measure the pressure in the brain.
- Remove excess CSF from the ventricle.

### What can I expect when the Ommaya reservoir is placed?

An Ommaya reservoir is inserted in the operating room while you are asleep. Before surgery, the hair where the reservoir will be placed may be shaved. The neurosurgeon will make an incision in the skin on your scalp. A small opening is made in the skull. The reservoir is then placed between the scalp and the skull; the tube is positioned in the ventricle. The incision is closed with stitches. This surgery will take 1 to 2 hours. After surgery, a computed tomography (CT) scan is done to verify placement.

## What can I expect after surgery?

Most patients have only minor pain. Talk with your doctor or nurse about what pain medicine you can take. The stitches will be taken out after 7 to 14 days.

Until the stitches are taken out and the incision is healed:

- **Keep your scalp incision dry.**
- Follow your neurosurgeon's instructions for washing your hair.
- Avoid cigarettes, cigars, secondhand smoke and e-cigarettes. The nicotine in these products can delay healing.
- Avoid any injury to the area.

## What steps are used to access the Ommaya reservoir?

First, your doctor or nurse will feel for the reservoir. The skin around the Ommaya reservoir will be cleaned. A small needle will be inserted into the reservoir.

If needed, a small amount of fluid will be taken out with a syringe and sent to the lab for testing. Medication will then be injected into the reservoir slowly over a few minutes. After the needle is removed, the area may be covered with a small bandage.

The entire process takes 10 to 15 minutes.

## What do you do after the reservoir is accessed?

Your doctor or nurse may ask you to lie still for a few minutes after the reservoir is accessed.

You may then sit, stand and do all normal activities, including washing your hair.

## When should you call your doctor or nurse?

If you have any of the following, please contact your doctor or nurse.

- Soreness, redness or drainage from the site.
- Fever 100.5° F or higher.
- A stiff neck.
- A headache with or without vomiting.
- Blurred vision.

## Northwestern Medicine – Health Information Resources

For more information, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Alberto Culver Health Learning Center (HLC) at [hlc@nm.org](mailto:hlc@nm.org), or by calling 312.926.5465. Health information professionals can help you find the information you need and provide you with personal support at no charge.

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at [nm.org](http://nm.org).

*Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.*

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363 or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363.

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