

Brain AVM (Abnormal Blood Vessel Tangle in the Brain)

Understanding your condition—and knowing what to do next

What is a Brain AVM?

A brain AVM stands for **arteriovenous malformation**. While the name sounds complex, the idea can be explained simply.

Inside your brain, blood normally flows in an organized way:

- Arteries carry blood **into** the brain
- Veins carry blood **out of** the brain
- Between them are tiny vessels that slow the flow and allow oxygen to be delivered safely

👉 In a brain AVM, this normal pathway is disrupted.

Instead of flowing smoothly, the blood passes through a **tangled cluster of abnormal vessels**.

You can think of it like:

👉 **A knot of blood vessels where the normal flow is bypassed**

This causes:

- Blood to flow too quickly
- Increased pressure in the vessels
- A risk of bleeding over time

Why Does a Brain AVM Occur?

Most brain AVMs are **present from birth**, even though they may not cause symptoms until later in life.

Important points:

- It is not something you caused
- It is not due to lifestyle or injury
- Many people are unaware they have it

👉 Some AVMs are discovered only when symptoms appear or during scans for other reasons.

Why is It Important?

A brain AVM matters because:

- The abnormal vessels are **weaker than normal vessels**
- There is a **risk of bleeding in the brain**
- It can affect brain function depending on its location

👉 However, not all AVMs behave the same way.

Some remain stable for years, while others may need treatment.

Symptoms to Watch For

Symptoms vary depending on:

- The size of the AVM
- Its location in the brain
- Whether bleeding has occurred

1. No Symptoms (Common Scenario)

Many people with an AVM have:

👉 **No symptoms at all**

The AVM may be found:

- Incidentally during brain scans
- While investigating headaches or other conditions

This can be surprising—but it also allows time to plan the best approach.

2. Headaches

Some patients experience:

- Recurrent headaches
- Unusual headache patterns
- Headaches different from previous ones

👉 Not all headaches are caused by AVMs—but changes in pattern should be checked.

3. Seizures

Seizures are one of the more common ways an AVM presents.

These may include:

- Sudden shaking movements
- Brief loss of awareness
- Unusual sensations

👉 This can be the first sign that something is affecting the brain.

4. Neurological Symptoms

Depending on where the AVM is located, symptoms may include:

- Weakness in the arm or leg
- Numbness
- Difficulty speaking
- Vision problems
- Balance issues

👉 These symptoms occur because the AVM affects nearby brain tissue.

5. Bleeding (More Serious Presentation) 🚨

If an AVM bleeds, symptoms may appear suddenly:

- Sudden severe headache
- Vomiting
- Weakness on one side of the body
- Difficulty speaking
- Loss of consciousness

Urgent Warning Signs 🚨

Seek immediate medical attention if you experience:

- Sudden severe headache
- Seizure
- Sudden weakness or numbness
- Difficulty speaking or understanding
- Collapse or loss of consciousness

👉 These may indicate **bleeding in the brain**, which requires urgent care.

When Should You See a Neurosurgeon?

You should consider specialist evaluation if:

- You have been diagnosed with a brain AVM
- You experience seizures
- You have unexplained neurological symptoms
- You have unusual or persistent headaches
- You want a clear understanding of your condition

👉 Even if you feel well, understanding your AVM is important.

👉 A key point:

Not all AVMs need treatment—but all AVMs need proper assessment.

How is a Brain AVM Treated?

Treatment decisions are highly individual.

They depend on:

- Size and location of the AVM
- Symptoms
- Risk of bleeding
- Your overall health

👉 The goal is always:

To reduce the risk of bleeding while preserving brain function

1. Observation (Careful Monitoring)

In some cases:

- The AVM may be monitored with regular scans
- No immediate treatment is required

This approach may be chosen if:

- The AVM is small and stable
- The risks of treatment outweigh benefits

👉 Monitoring does not mean ignoring—it means careful follow-up.

2. Surgery (Removal of AVM)

Surgical removal may be recommended if the AVM is accessible and safe to remove.

This involves:

- Carefully removing the abnormal vessel cluster
- Restoring normal blood flow

👉 The aim:

To completely eliminate the AVM

3. Endovascular Treatment (Embolisation)

This is a minimally invasive procedure.

It involves:

- Passing a small tube through blood vessels
- Reaching the AVM from inside
- Blocking abnormal blood flow using special materials

👉 Often used:

- As part of a combined treatment plan
- Before surgery to reduce risk

4. Radiosurgery (Focused Radiation)

This is a non-invasive treatment.

It uses:

- Precisely targeted radiation
- Gradual closure of the abnormal vessels over time

👉 Suitable for:

- Smaller AVMs
- Deep or difficult-to-reach areas

Frequently Asked Questions

“Do all AVMs need treatment?”

No. Some can be monitored safely depending on individual factors.

“Is treatment risky?”

Each treatment option has risks, but careful planning helps minimise them.

“Will I recover fully?”

Many patients do well, especially with early diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

“Can I live normally?”

Yes. Many people with AVMs continue normal lives with proper care and monitoring.

Why Choose a Specialist?

Brain AVMs are complex and require **individualised decision-making**.

Choosing the right specialist ensures:

- Accurate diagnosis
- Careful evaluation of risks and benefits
- Access to multiple treatment options
- A personalised treatment plan

As a **Consultant Neurosurgeon**, I manage complex brain conditions, including vascular disorders like AVMs.

My approach is:

- ✓ Clear explanation in simple language
- ✓ Careful review of scans and symptoms
- ✓ Honest discussion of all options
- ✓ Focus on safety and long-term outcomes
- ✓ Support for you and your family

👉 Most importantly:

You are guided through every step—not left to navigate this alone.

A Reassuring Thought

Hearing the term “brain AVM” can feel overwhelming.

But it is important to remember:

- 👉 Many AVMs are manageable
- 👉 Not all require immediate treatment
- 👉 Modern treatments are highly advanced
- 👉 Early evaluation gives you clarity and control

You are not alone—and there are safe, effective options available.

Take the First Step Toward Clarity

If you have:

- Been diagnosed with a brain AVM
- Experienced seizures
- Unexplained neurological symptoms
- Concerns about your condition

It is important to seek proper evaluation.




A consultation can help you understand:


- What your diagnosis means
- Whether treatment is needed
- What your options are

Book Your Consultation

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- 👉 Don't wait for symptoms to worsen
- 👉 Early assessment provides peace of mind
- 👉 The right guidance can protect your brain health

Take the first step today—your health and future matter.