

Understanding cavernoma

A practical starting point for patients, family and friends.

What it is

A cavernoma (CCM) is a cluster of abnormal small blood vessels in the brain or spinal cord. It is not cancer. Some cause no symptoms. Others cause seizures, headaches or neurological difficulties. MRI is the main diagnostic scan.

Symptoms deserve attention

People may experience numbness, weakness, vision or balance changes, fatigue or concentration difficulties. A symptom alone does not prove bleeding. New or worsening symptoms need medical assessment.

The choices are individual

Monitoring: agree a review plan, responsibility for follow-up and a route back to specialist care.

Medicines: treatment may help control seizures or headaches.

Surgery: selected symptomatic lesions may be removed, but location and individual risks matter. Neurological injury is a possible complication.

Other approaches: radiosurgery or minimally invasive techniques are considered only in selected circumstances. Ask about evidence for your particular case.

When to seek urgent help

In the UK, call 999 for sudden stroke-like symptoms, such as facial droop, arm weakness or speech difficulty, a sudden extremely severe headache, or loss of consciousness. Seek help even if stroke symptoms stop. Elsewhere, call your local emergency number.

General education, not personal medical advice. Sources are listed on page 2.

Take questions. Leave with a plan.

At your appointment

Where is my cavernoma? What do my current scans show? Is there evidence of recent bleeding? Which symptoms may be related? What else needs investigation?

What are my options? How do monitoring, medicines and surgery compare for me? What could treatment affect? Who is responsible for the next scan or review? Can I have the plan in writing?

Practical steps

Record episodes, their duration and recovery. Take a witness account if available. Keep an up-to-date medicines list. Ask about safety around water, cooking, work and exercise if awareness is affected.

After a suspected seizure, stop driving and seek medical and licensing advice. Do not abruptly stop prescribed medicines. Discuss supplements, hormones and blood-thinning medication individually with your care team.

Spiritual practice can offer personal comfort. It is not a proven treatment for a cavernoma or a substitute for medical care.

Sources and further reading

NHS: cavernoma | [nhs.uk/conditions/cavernoma/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cavernoma/)

NHS: stroke symptoms | [nhs.uk/conditions/stroke/symptoms/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stroke/symptoms/)

Alliance to Cure: 2025 CCM care guidelines | alliancetocure.org

Penn Medicine: cavernous malformations

GOV.UK: epilepsy and driving

Sources checked 9 September 2026. Guidance may change; consult your clinician.