



Home → Health Topics → Brain Diseases

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/braindiseases.html>

Brain Diseases

Your brain is the control center of your body. It controls your thoughts, memory, speech, and movement. It regulates the function of many organs. It's part of your nervous system, which also includes your spinal cord and peripheral nerves. The nervous system sends signals between your brain and the rest of the body. Your nerves take in information from your senses and send it to the brain to be processed. Your brain and nerves also communicate to help you move and to control your body's functions.

When the brain is healthy, it works quickly and automatically. But when you have a brain disease, it may affect how well you can function and do your daily activities. Some common brain diseases include:

- Brain tumors [<https://medlineplus.gov/braintumors.html>] , which can press on nerves and affect brain function.
- Degenerative nerve diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/degenerativenervediseases.html>] , which can affect many of your body's activities, such as balance [<https://medlineplus.gov/balanceproblems.html>] , movement [<https://medlineplus.gov/movementdisorders.html>] , talking [<https://medlineplus.gov/speechandcommunicationdisorders.html>] , breathing [<https://medlineplus.gov/breathingproblems.html>] , and heart function. Types include Alzheimer's disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/alzheimersdisease.html>] and Parkinson's disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/parkinsonsdisease.html>] .
- Encephalitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/encephalitis.html>] (inflammation in the brain), which can lead to problems such as vision loss [<https://medlineplus.gov/visionimpairmentandblindness.html>] , weakness, and paralysis [<https://medlineplus.gov/paralysis.html>] .
- Genetic brain disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/geneticbraindisorders.html>] , which are caused by changes in genes (also called variants or mutations). These disorders can affect the development and function of the brain.
- Strokes [<https://medlineplus.gov/stroke.html>] , which can cause a loss of brain cells and can affect your ability to think clearly.
- Traumatic brain injuries [<https://medlineplus.gov/traumaticbraininjury.html>] (TBIs), which can affect brain function. They may range from mild to severe. The effects of a TBI may be temporary or permanent.

The symptoms of brain diseases vary widely, depending on the specific problem. In some cases, damage is permanent. In other cases, treatments such as surgery, medicines, or therapies such as physical, occupational, and speech therapies, may cure the disease or improve the symptoms.

Start Here

- Brain Basics: Know Your Brain [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/public-education/brain-basics/brain-basics-know-your-brain>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)

Diagnosis and Tests

- Brain MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/mri-brain>]  (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/mri-brain>]
- Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF) Analysis [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/cerebrospinal-fluid-csf-analysis/>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/analisis-del-liquido-cefalorraquideo/>]

- Functional MRI (fMRI) [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/fmribrain>] (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/fmribrain>]
- Head CT [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/headct>]  (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/headct>]
- Neurological Exam [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/neurological-exam/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/examen-neurologico/>]

Treatments and Therapies

- About Neurointerventions [<https://snisonline.org/about/>] (Society of NeuroInterventional Surgery)
- Intracranial Hypertension: Medication and Surgery [<https://ihrfoundation.org/treatment/medication-and-surgery>] (Intracranial Hypertension Research Foundation)

Specifics

- Birth Disorders of the Brain and Spinal Cord [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/birth-disorders-brain-and-spinal-cord>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Hepatic Encephalopathy [<https://liverfoundation.org/liver-diseases/complications-of-liver-disease/hepatic-encephalopathy/>]  (American Liver Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://liverfoundation.org/es/enfermedades-del-HIGADO/complicaciones-de-la-enfermedad-hep%C3%A1tica/encefalopat%C3%ADA-hep%C3%A1tica/>]
- Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/hypoxic-ischemic-encephalopathy>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Kluver-Bucy Syndrome [<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/6840/klver-bucy-syndrome>]  (Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center)
- Periventricular Leukomalacia [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/periventricular-leukomalacia>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Pseudotumor Cerebri [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/pseudotumor-cerebri>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Pseudotumor Cerebri (Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension) [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/pseudotumor-cerebri/symptoms-causes/syc-20354031?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Wernicke-Korsakoff Syndrome [<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/wernicke-korsakoff-syndrome>]  (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/el-sindrome-de-wernicke-korsakoff>]
- What Is IH (Intracranial Hypertension)? [<https://ihrfoundation.org/what-is-ih>] (Intracranial Hypertension Research Foundation)

Genetics

- Acute necrotizing encephalopathy type 1: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/acute-necrotizing-encephalopathy-type-1>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Biotin-thiamine-responsive basal ganglia disease: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/biotin-thiamine-responsive-basal-ganglia-disease>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- COL4A1-related brain small-vessel disease: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/col4a1-related-brain-small-vessel-disease>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Familial porencephaly: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/familial-porencephaly>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Hereditary cerebral amyloid angiopathy: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/hereditary-cerebral-amyloid-angiopathy>]  (National Library of Medicine)

- Primary familial brain calcification: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/primary-familial-brain-calcification>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Images

- Craniotomy - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100048_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100048_1.htm]

Videos and Tutorials

- Athetosis resulting from basal ganglia injury [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000007.htm>] 
(Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/anatomyvideos/000007.htm>]
- Brain components [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000016.htm>] 
(Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/anatomyvideos/000016.htm>]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Brain Diseases [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Brain+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Trustworthy causal biomarker discovery: a multiomics brain imaging genetics-based approach. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40662843>]
- Article: Autoantibodies Against Collapsin Response Mediator Proteins Associated With Encephalopathy/Myelopathy: A Single-Center... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40583162>]
- Article: National study on pediatric acute encephalopathy in Japan (April 2020 to... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40570505>]
- Brain Diseases -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Brain+Diseases%22%5Bmaj%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22ast+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Reference Desk

- Brain Facts: Glossary [<https://www.brainfacts.org/Glossary>] (Society for Neuroscience)
- Central Nervous System: The Brain and Spinal Cord [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/central-nervous-system.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/central-nervous-system.html>]
- Cerebral Atrophy [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/glossary-neurological-terms#cerebral-atrophy>] 
- Glossary of Neurological Terms [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/glossary-neurological-terms>] 
- Your Brain and Nervous System [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/brain.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/brain.html>]

Find an Expert

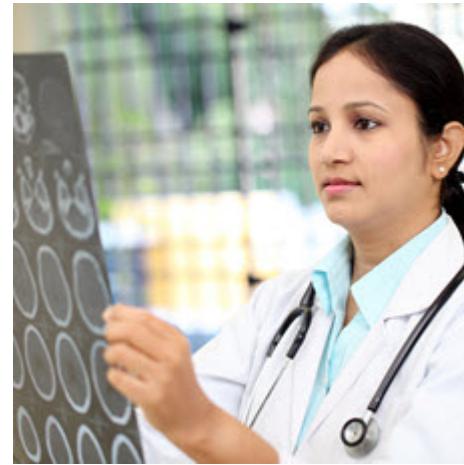
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/>] 

Patient Handouts

- Basal ganglia dysfunction [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001069.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001069.htm>]

- Brain abscess [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000783.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000783.htm>]
- Brain surgery [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003018.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003018.htm>]
- Cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) collection [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003428.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003428.htm>]
- EEG [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003931.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003931.htm>]
- Idiopathic intracranial hypertension [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000351.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000351.htm>]
- Loss of brain function - liver disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000302.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000302.htm>]
- Osmotic demyelination syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000775.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000775.htm>]
- Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000771.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000771.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

[Ammonia blood test](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003506.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003506.htm>]

[Athetosis resulting from basal ganglia injury](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000007.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000007.htm>]

[Basal ganglia dysfunction](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001069.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001069.htm>]

[Brain abscess](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000783.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000783.htm>]

[Brain components](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000016.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000016.htm>]

[Brain PET scan](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007341.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007341.htm>]

[Brain surgery](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003018.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003018.htm>]

[Brain surgery - discharge](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000124.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000124.htm>]

[Cerebral amyloid angiopathy](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000719.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000719.htm>]

[Cerebral hypoxia](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001435.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001435.htm>]

[Cerebral spinal fluid \(CSF\) collection](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003428.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003428.htm>]

[Craniotomy - series](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100048_1.htm) [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100048_1.htm]

[EEG](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003931.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003931.htm>]

Fontanelles - bulging [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003310.htm>]

Head CT scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003786.htm>]

Head MRI [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003791.htm>]

Hepatocerebral degeneration [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001393.htm>]

Hypothalamic dysfunction [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001202.htm>]

Idiopathic intracranial hypertension [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000351.htm>]

Increased intracranial pressure [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000793.htm>]

Intraventricular hemorrhage of the newborn [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007301.htm>]

Loss of brain function - liver disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000302.htm>]

Neurosciences [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007456.htm>]

Osmotic demyelination syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000775.htm>]

Periventricular leukomalacia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007232.htm>]

Skull x-ray [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003802.htm>]

Subdural hematoma [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000713.htm>]

Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000771.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Alzheimer's Disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/alzheimersdisease.html>]

Brain Malformations [<https://medlineplus.gov/brainmalformations.html>]

Brain Tumors [<https://medlineplus.gov/braintumors.html>]

Cerebellar Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/cerebellardisorders.html>]

Concussion [<https://medlineplus.gov/concussion.html>]

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/creutzfeldtjakobdisease.html>]

Degenerative Nerve Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/degenerativenervediseases.html>]

Dementia [<https://medlineplus.gov/dementia.html>]

Encephalitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/encephalitis.html>]

Epilepsy [<https://medlineplus.gov/epilepsy.html>]

Genetic Brain Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/geneticbraindisorders.html>]

Hydrocephalus [<https://medlineplus.gov/hydrocephalus.html>]

Stroke [<https://medlineplus.gov/stroke.html>]

Traumatic Brain Injury [<https://medlineplus.gov/traumaticbraininjury.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Brain Diseases* is the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/>]

[\[https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html\]](https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html) about external links and our quality guidelines

[\[https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html\]](https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html).

The information on this site should not be used as a substitute for professional medical care or advice. Contact a health care provider if you have questions about your health.

[Learn how to cite this page](#)

National Library of Medicine 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health

Last updated February 9, 2024