

AWA Matters

For Members of American Workers Association

2024



When Blood Vessels Go Awry Understanding Vascular Malformations

Blood vessels wind all throughout your body. They ensure that blood, and the oxygen it carries, reaches all your body's cells and tissues. Arteries carry oxygen-rich blood from your heart to organs and tissues. Veins carry blood back to your heart to pick up more oxygen. And tiny vessels called capillaries connect the arteries to the veins.

But sometimes, the blood vessels don't grow quite right. When blood vessels in the brain form in an abnormal way, it's called a vascular malformation.

Several types of vascular malformations exist. Some pose little risk. But two types can be at increased risk of leaking or breaking open. This can cause bleeding in the brain, which can lead to brain damage or death. These are arteriovenous malformations, or AVMs, and cerebral cavernous malformations, or CCMs (also called cavernous angiomas).

In AVMs, arteries bypass capillaries and connect directly to veins. They're like short circuits in your circulation. Blood then rushes into veins much faster than usual. This leads to high blood pressure in the vessels.

In CCMs, capillaries in the brain can balloon over 20 times their usual width. Blood pools in these enlarged capillaries. The walls can get stretched to the breaking point.

Both AVMs and CCMs strain blood vessel walls, increasing the chance of the vessels breaking. They can also put pressure on parts of the brain.

AVMs and CCMs are rare. Each affects less than 1% of people. Many people who have them may not know it. Most people with AVMs or CCMs have only mild symptoms, such as headaches or dizziness. They may have no symptoms at all. But once a malformation starts to leak out blood, it can cause seizures or strokes. It also becomes more likely to bleed again.

Vascular malformations can sometimes be removed or repaired with surgery. Doctors may also be able to use a focused beam of radiation to destroy them. Some AVMs can be plugged with a type of glue delivered through a tube inserted in an artery. But these procedures can be risky, especially if the malformation is deep inside the brain.

If a malformation has not already bled, the safest course may be to just keep an eye on it. Medications can help with some symptoms, like headaches and seizures.

"It all depends on where the malformation is in the brain, and what is the risk of treatment versus watching," explains Dr. Issam Awad, a neurosurgeon at the University of Chicago.

Awad researches the underlying causes of vascular malformation development and bleeding. Sometimes gene abnormalities are involved. His team is looking at whether gut bacteria may play a role. They've shown that people with CCMs have different kinds of gut bacteria than those without CCMs. They've also found certain molecules in the blood that are linked with these bacteria. His team hopes that these molecules might someday be used to test whether someone will develop CCMs, or whether a CCM is likely to bleed.

But for now, talk with your health care provider if you're concerned about a family history or symptoms of a vascular malformation.

Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health



Symptoms of Vascular Malformations

- Seizures that can involve convulsions, a loss of control over movement, or a sudden change in alertness or awareness.
- Headache, especially if it's consistently in the same place.
- Vision problems.
- Muscle weakness in part of the body or face.
- Problems with hearing or understanding speech.
- Problems with walking or other complex movements.
- Numbness or tingling in part of the body.
- Thinking difficulties, such as confusion, memory problems, or hallucinations.
- Dizziness.
- Loss of consciousness.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of American Workers Association will be held at 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, MO 63131, on Wednesday, July 10, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. (CST) for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting and any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

PROXY **American Workers Association** **July 10, 2024 Annual Meeting of Members** **THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF** **AMERICAN WORKERS ASSOCIATION**

The undersigned member of American Workers Association does hereby constitute and appoint the President of American Workers Association, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of American Workers Association and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

1. FOR [], or to [] WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors:
Jay Delsing, Dave Ott, Nathan Dierking
2. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

DATED: _____, 2024

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Please date and sign and return promptly to 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, MO 63131 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

St. Louis, Missouri
June 30, 2024
Date



Lasting Protection from Peanut Allergy

Peanut allergy is one of the most common food allergies. It often begins in childhood and usually lasts for life. Symptoms include hives, lip swelling, and trouble breathing. It can even be deadly.

Several years ago, an NIH-funded study found that kids who began eating foods with peanuts as infants were less likely to become allergic to them. By age 5, their risk of peanut allergy had dropped by 81% compared to kids who had avoided peanuts. Most of the peanut-eating kids stayed allergy-free up to age 6.

In a new follow-up study, researchers asked how long this protection could last. They tracked about 500 of the original study participants up to about age 13. They found that only one child in the peanut-eating group had developed a new peanut allergy.

Overall, less than 5% of the peanut-eating kids were allergic at age 13. For comparison, about 15% of the peanut-avoiding kids were allergic. Early and regular exposure to peanuts in childhood had reduced teens' peanut allergy risk by 71%.

The results show that beginning to eat peanut products in infancy can have lasting benefits. But parents should talk with a doctor first. A doctor can test to make sure the child is not already allergic.

"If widely implemented, this safe, simple strategy could prevent tens of thousands of cases of peanut allergy in the United States each year," says Dr. Jeanne Marrazzo, director of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health



Members have unlimited access to registered nurses via a toll-free number 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Nurses are specially trained to offer prompt, confidential assistance, helping members experiencing acute, in-the-moment health symptoms, make informed decisions about their next health care steps. There is no cost to use the NurseLine benefit. Nurses do not diagnose or provide treatment.

The NurseLine benefit is provided for health information only for members experiencing acute symptoms and is not a substitute for regular physical examinations or medical treatment visits and is not meant to replace the customary physician-patient relationship. Callers are encouraged to consult with their physician about any health conditions or concerns.

Members have unlimited access to registered nurses via a toll-free number 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - at no cost! Nurses are specially trained to offer prompt, confidential assistance, helping members experiencing acute, in-the moment health symptoms, make informed decisions about their next health care steps. Nurses do not diagnose or provide treatment.

 Our Services:

- Guidance and information for dealing with acute, new onset health symptoms including:
 - Chest/stomach pain
 - Baby's fever
 - Dizziness
 - GI symptoms
 - Injury/Cuts/Bites
 - Allergic reactions
- After speaking with a nurse, upon the member's request, general information on various health conditions can be provided via email or mail.

Visit your association website for complete details.



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AWA Matters is published by:
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Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Benefits may not be available in all membership levels. For more information, or to upgrade your membership, please call 1-800-387-9027.

American Workers Association (AWA) is a non-profit organization serving the goals and needs of the independently employed across the nation. Since its inception in 1995 AWA has been dedicated to providing benefits and resources to help its members, as well as advocacy opportunities so they can have a voice on issues to positively impact their lives.

Despite changes to the economy and the health care landscape that have made an uncertain future, AWA is focused on assisting its members in any way possible and growing into a leader for everyday families.

