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MADISON NEUROLOGY LLC

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Neurology Care 7 days a Week. Because Your Brain Matters.

Cerebral Venous Sinus Thrombosis (CVST)

Patient education guide · Stroke & Vascular · Madison Neurology LLC

What is it?

Cerebral venous sinus thrombosis is a blood clot in the brain's venous sinuses — the channels that drain blood from the brain. Blocked drainage raises pressure in the brain and can cause headache, stroke-like symptoms, or seizures. It is an uncommon type of stroke that often affects younger adults.

How does it happen?

Risk factors include inherited or acquired clotting disorders, pregnancy and the postpartum period, estrogen-containing birth control pills, dehydration, infections (such as ear or sinus infections), inflammatory diseases, cancer, and head injury. In some patients no cause is found.

Common symptoms

- Severe headache, often gradually worsening over days
- Blurred vision or vision loss (from high pressure)
- Seizures
- Weakness, numbness, or speech difficulty on one side
- Nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, or confusion

How is it diagnosed?

MR venography (MRV) or CT venography (CTV) shows the clot and the blocked sinus. Blood tests may look for clotting disorders, and a lumbar puncture may be needed to measure pressure or rule out infection.

How is it treated?

The mainstay is anticoagulation (blood thinners) — even when some bleeding is present — started promptly and usually continued for 3-12 months or longer if a clotting disorder is found. Severe cases

may need endovascular clot removal. Headache, seizures, and pressure-related vision problems are treated alongside.

What does the future hold?

Most patients recover well, especially with early treatment; roughly 80% have a good outcome. Headaches may take weeks to months to settle. Recurrence is uncommon but possible, so identifying and managing the underlying cause is important. Future pregnancies and estrogen use require specialist planning.

Questions patients commonly ask

Q: Can I ever take birth control pills again?

A: Estrogen-containing contraception is generally avoided after CVST; non-hormonal or progestin-only options are discussed with your doctors.

Q: How long will I be on blood thinners?

A: Typically 3-12 months; longer or lifelong if an ongoing clotting tendency is identified.

Q: Is it safe to get pregnant after CVST?

A: Usually yes, with planning — most women are managed with preventive blood thinner injections during pregnancy and after delivery.

National support groups & resources

- **American Stroke Association** — stroke.org — 1-888-478-7653
- **American Heart Association** — heart.org — 1-800-242-8721
- **American Academy of Neurology — Brain & Life patient resources** — brainandlife.org

(Organization contact details were current at the time of compilation; please verify online.)

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