

# Chiari & Comorbid Symptoms Compilation (Revised)

## HEADACHES

- ☐ Occipital headaches - headaches centered around the suboccipital bone (base of skull to the back of the neck).
- ☐ Valsalva headaches – a type of occipital headache that is made worse by coughing, sneezing, heaving, laughing, etc.

*These headaches are usually associated with problems of the craniocervical junction - Chiari Malformation and/or Craniocervical Instability (CCI), Atlantoaxial Instability (AAI), Basilar Invagination (BI), indicative of cranial settling), etc.*

- ☐ High-pressure headaches – headaches that are worse when lying down and improve with being upright (often accompanied by occipital headaches).
- ☐ Orthostatic (low-pressure) headaches (often associated with CSF leaks) – headaches that get worse when upright and improve with lying down (often accompanied by occipital headaches).

*Due to the nature of these pressure headaches, you will only have one or the other at any given time. However, there is a connection between the two, so you may notice that you used to have one and now feel more like the other.*

## NEURALGIA

- ☐ Occipital (back of head/neck)
- ☐ Trigeminal (pain and numbness in the face)

*These neuralgias are commonly associated with damage to the cranial nerves located on/near the brainstem at the base of skull.*

## OTHER HEAD/NECK SYMPTOMS

- ☐ Neck pain/tension/spasms
- ☐ Feeling like your head is too heavy for your neck (like a bobblehead)
- ☐ Decreased neck mobility (up/down & side/side)
- ☐ Popping/cracking sounds in neck or upper back when stretching (Crepitus)

*These head/neck symptoms are often associated with compromised connective tissue and degeneration often caused or exacerbated by the blockage of spinal fluid.*

## EQUILIBRIUM/BALANCE PROBLEMS

- ☐ Clumsiness
- ☐ Dizziness (Vertigo)
- ☐ Cervical Vertigo
- ☐ Height Vertigo
- ☐ Unsteady or drunken-like gait (walking difficulties)
- ☐ Swaying/Floating Sensation
- ☐ Dysmetria (hypermetria/hypometria)
- ☐ Bilateral problems with coordination of movement
- ☐ Difficulty walking on uneven ground
- ☐ Difficulty negotiating steps/stairs

*These equilibrium/balance issues are often associated with damage to the cerebellum and/or the vestibulocochlear nerve.*

## CARDIO-RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS

- ☐ Episodes of rapid heart rate (tachycardia)
- ☐ Heart Palpitations
- ☐ Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS)
- ☐ Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- ☐ Hypotension (low blood pressure)
- ☐ Tightness or heaviness in/on chest
- ☐ Sudden/abrupt changes in blood pressure due to awkward position of head
- ☐ Abnormal breathing
- ☐ Shortness of breath
- ☐ Sleep Apnea (Central, Obstructive, or Mixed)
- ☐ Throat closes when lying flat
- ☐ "Strangling" feeling
- ☐ Feeling like there's a "lump" in your throat
- ☐ Blackout spells (related to syncope)
- ☐ Fainting (syncope)
- ☐ Sensitive gag reflex
- ☐ Lack of gag reflex
- ☐ Excessive choking/aspiration (oropharyngeal dysphagia; inhaling food, fluid and/or saliva down into the lungs)

*These cardio-respiratory problems are generally associated with damage to the vagus nerve, which starts at the base of the brainstem.*

## ESOPHAGEAL/GASTROINTESTINAL PROBLEMS

- ☐ Difficulty swallowing (esophageal dysphagia; food/meds get stuck in your esophagus before entering your stomach)
- ☐ Nausea/vomiting
- ☐ Gas/bloating
- ☐ Abdominal pain
- ☐ GERD (Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease)
- ☐ Hiccups (especially when drinking carbonated beverages)
- ☐ Increased food allergies/sensitivities

*These esophageal/gastrointestinal problems are generally associated with damage to the vagus nerve, one of the longest nerves in the body, which starts at the base of the brainstem and travels to the gut.*

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## COGNITIVE PROBLEMS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia/Fatigue   | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression/Anxiety   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brain fog (problems thinking and/or concentrating)         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitivity to auditory stimuli  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (sADHD) | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotions (over/under emotional)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memory Problems (long/short term)                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Easily confused (sometimes causing aggression, resentment and/or depression) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mild Aphasia (problems remembering words)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Processing Problems (especially auditory stimuli)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dyslexia   |   |

*While some of these cognitive problems can be directly physiological in nature, most are associated with Mast Cell Activation (MCAS) problems, caused by damage to the vagus nerve.*

## EYE/VISION PROBLEMS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blindness or Color Blindness | <input type="checkbox"/> Problems with depth perception                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blurred/Double Vision        | <input type="checkbox"/> Aura Disturbances (floaters, spots, halos, or fireflies) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blind spots                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Photophobia (sensitivity to bright lights)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased peripheral vision  | <input type="checkbox"/> Problems with depth perception                           |

*Most of our optical (eye/vision) problems are generally associated other conditions that are "comorbid" to Chiari (etiological or pathological to Chiari), such as Ehlers-Danlos or Intracranial Hypertension.*

## EAR/HEARING PROBLEMS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing loss   | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased sensitivity to certain frequencies (Hypersensitive) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fluctuating hearing  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pain/tension along ear, eye, jaw line                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pressure (stopped up feeling) in the ears (aural fullness) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fluid-like sound in ears (like water running)                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ringing or buzzing in the ears (tinnitus)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hear heartbeat in ears  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intolerance of loud/confusing sounds                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Earaches  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased sensitivity to noise (Hyperacusis; Misophonia)   |  |

*Many of our auditory (ear/hearing) problems are associated with damage to the vestibulocochlear nerve, which connects the brainstem at the pontomedullary junction, which is the groove between the lower pons and the upper medulla oblongata, often damaged by the cerebellar compression with Chiari.*

## SENSORY PROBLEMS (TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tingling/crawling feeling on scalp/body | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric shock sensations (Lhermitte's sign) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Itchiness                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of taste                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pins/needles sensations                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Problems with sense of smell (loss of smell) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burning sensations                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased sensation to temperature           |

*Most of these sensory problems center around nerve damage (cranial or peripheral), while others are centered around damage to the spinal cord.*

## PROBLEMS WITH VOICE/SPEECH/ORAL

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hoarseness/inability to modulate voice when singing or speaking loudly | <input type="checkbox"/> Voice Tremors                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slurred speech   | <input type="checkbox"/> Disjointed (incoherent) speech |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change in voice character and timber                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive Drooling             |

*These issues are often associated with damage to one or more of the cranial nerves.*

## PROBLEMS WITH EXTREMITIES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor blood circulation (cold hands/feet)             | <input type="checkbox"/> Numbness/tingling sensation (paresthesia; can be felt in arms/hands, legs/feet, face/scalp, trunk) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased sensation to touch in extremities          | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint laxity/hypermobility problems (subluxations, dislocations, early degeneration, etc.)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased hand coordination (poor fine motor skills) |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spasms/Tremors (internal and external)               |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arms/legs feel heavy & hard to lift                  |   |

*These problems of the extremities can have a variety of pathologies of the spine and nerves, but in general the point of damage is generally above the problematic extremity.*

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GYNECOLOGICAL/UROLOGICAL PROBLEMS			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Numbness of the pelvic area	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pulling sensation while sitting/standing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Menstrual problems (severe cramping during period)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urinary frequency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of sexual interest (lack of sensation in pelvic area)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bladder/Bowel incontinence
<i>These gynecological/urological problems are generally associated with damage to the spinal cord/nerves at a point at/above the pelvic area, pathologies include but are not limited to Tethered Cord Syndrome (TCS) and/or degenerative disc issues.</i>			

OTHER PHYSICAL PROBLEMS			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decreased muscle tone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Excessive thirst
<input type="checkbox"/>	Muscle weakness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dehydration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Heaviness of limbs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swollen face
<input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted movements	<input type="checkbox"/>	Skin problems
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inability to regulate body temperature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dry skin and lips
<input type="checkbox"/>	Profuse sweating or inability to sweat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swollen lymph nodes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Excessive shivering or inability to shiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seborrheic Dermatitis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hair loss/thinning hair		
<i>These other physical problems can stem from a broad variety of issues, from Mast Cell Activation (MCAS), to symptoms of Dyautonomia, to damage to the spine/spinal nerves or other areas of the brain (such as the pituitary gland).</i>			

