Ommaya Reservoir

An Ommaya reservoir is a small plastic dome-like device with a small tube. The reservoir is placed under your scalp and the small tube is put into a space in your brain called a ventricle. The ventricle contains fluid called cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). The CSF surrounds and cushions your brain and spinal cord.

How is my Ommaya reservoir put in?

- Your Ommaya reservoir is placed during surgery.
- Your head will be shaved in the area where the reservoir will be placed.
- The incision will be closed with sutures or staples. It is important to keep your incision clean and dry. These will be taken out 10 to 14 days after your surgery by your doctor or nurse.
- Your reservoir is permanent unless there are complications.
Why is the Ommaya reservoir used?
An Ommaya reservoir can be used to:

- Give medicines directly into the CSF of your brain and spinal cord
- Take samples of CSF for testing
- Measure the pressure in your brain

How does my Ommaya reservoir work?

- Your doctor or nurse will gently feel the reservoir and pump it 3 to 5 times by pushing down on it gently. This is done to pull your CSF into the reservoir.
- Your hair over the reservoir will be shaved.
- The area on your scalp is cleaned with alcohol, then with a Chlorohexidine (CHG) antibacterial solution.
- A small needle is put into your reservoir.
- A small amount of CSF is removed and may be sent to the lab for testing.
- If you are getting medicine through your reservoir, your doctor or nurse will inject the medicine slowly over 5 to 10 minutes. Your reservoir will be pumped again 3 to 5 times to mix the medicine into your CSF.
- After the needle is removed, the area may be covered with a bandage and pressure will be applied for about one minute.
- The whole procedure takes 15 to 20 minutes.
- Side effects of the procedure may include headache, nausea, or vomiting, and pressure or pain when the needle is put into your reservoir.

What happens after my Ommaya Reservoir is used?

- You may be asked to lie flat for a period of time after your reservoir is used.
- When your doctor or nurse tells you it is okay to sit or stand, you may do all your normal activities. This includes washing your hair.
- Your reservoir does not need special care.
- You should not do activities that may cause injury or harm to your reservoir site.
When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor or nurse if you have any of the following:

- Pain, tenderness, redness, swelling or drainage where your Ommaya reservoir is located
- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- A stiff neck
- Headache
- Blurred vision