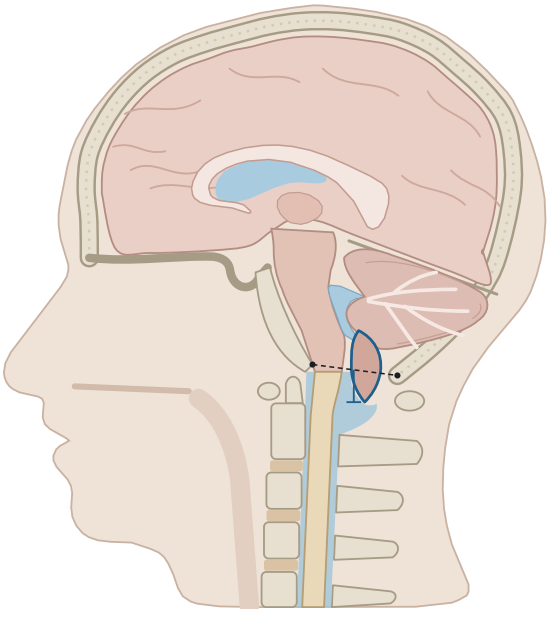
# What is Chiari malformation?

The lowest part of the cerebellum, the tonsils, extends below the foramen magnum, the opening at the base of the skull. The cerebellum helps control balance and coordination. It's often linked to a lower back part of the skull that is smaller or shaped differently than usual, which crowds the brain. Less often, it develops later in life for other reasons.

Most people are born with the skull differences that lead to it. Some never have symptoms; others first notice them as teens or adults.



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**Not medical advice.** Talk to your doctor about your own care. Chiari I. The tonsil extends below the dashed line. Tonsils shown at their lowest point, where MRI measures them. Illustration, not a medical image.

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