

Anatomy Lecture Notes Section 3: Nervous System

The Central Nervous System: The Brain and the Spinal Cord

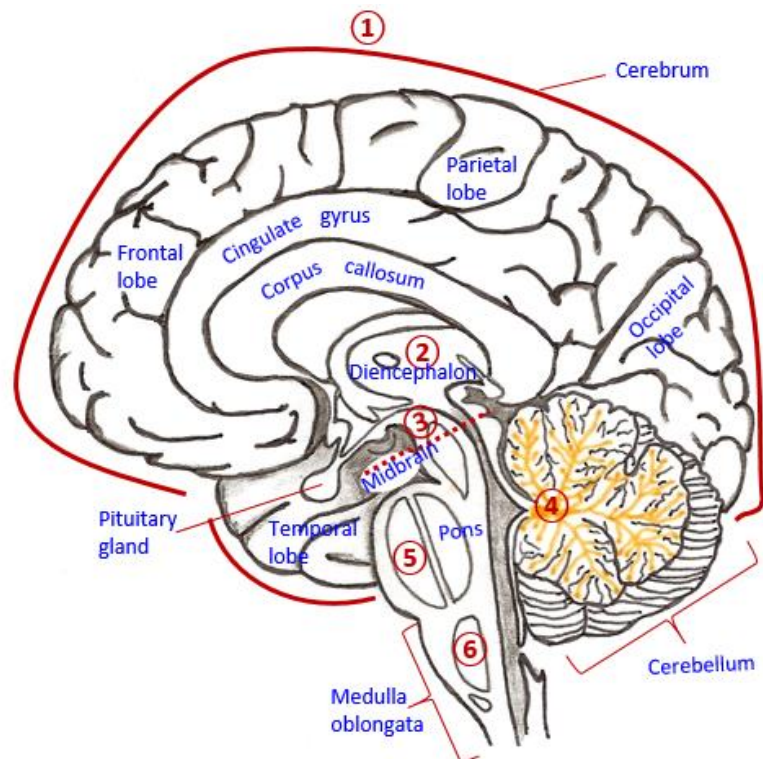
The nervous system is anatomically and functionally divided into two parts, the **Central Nervous System** (the brain and the spinal cord) and the **Peripheral Nervous System** (the ganglia, and 12 pairs of cranial nerves, plus 31 pairs of spinal nerves). The Peripheral Nervous System (PNS) can be further delineated into the **Somatic Nervous System** (SNS) which integrates control over skeletal muscle, and the **Autonomic Nervous System** (ANS) which for the most part automatically regulates vital internal organs and systems.

The Brain

In anatomy, we can divide the brain into six (6) parts in terms of information processing:

1. Cerebrum
2. Diencephalon
3. Midbrain
4. Cerebellum
5. Pons
6. Medulla oblongata

To the right is a mid-sagittal section of the brain showing various regions and the six major divisions (red circled numbers) of the human brain from the highest to lowest level of information processing.

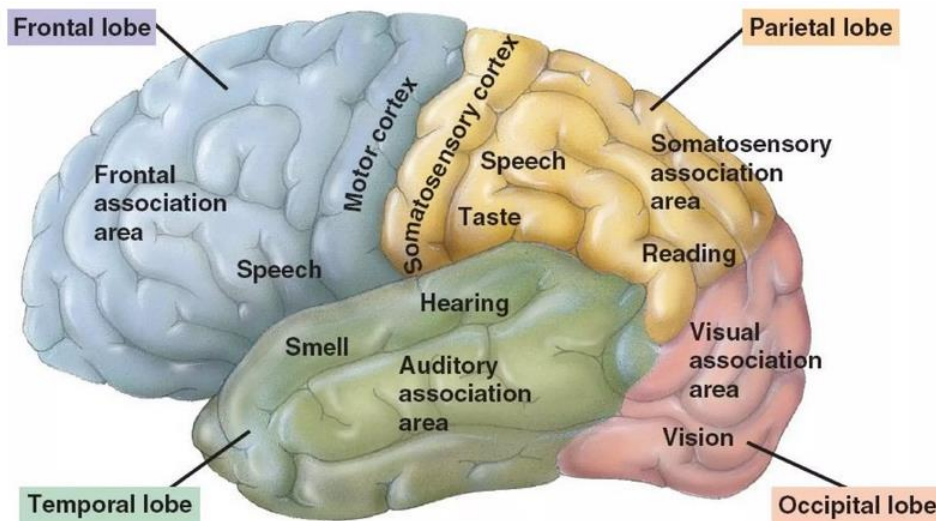


1. Cerebrum

The cerebrum is the largest most developed area of the human brain (see above) and is considered to be the center of the highest functions. Its major functions include: Awareness of sensory perception; voluntary control of movement (regulation of skeletal muscle movement); language; personality traits; sophisticated mental activities such as thinking, memory, decision making, predictive ability, creativity and self-consciousness. The cerebrum is composed of **5 lobes**, below is some basic information about them:

The Frontal Lobe – Encased within the frontal bone is the **largest** and most **complex** of the 5 lobes, concerned with higher intellectual functions and behavioral aspects of humans. The **primary motor cortex** controls the movement of skeletal muscles of the body.

The Parietal Lobe – Protected by the parietal bones of the skull, this lobe is primarily concerned with the interpretation and integration of body **sensory** inputs. The **somatosensory cortex** is associated with reception and perception of touch, vibration, temperature, and general body senses. Also involved in spatial orientation, movement coordination, reading, writing and mathematical computation.



The Temporal Lobe - Contains the **auditory cortex** for the perception of sound, and the **olfactory cortex** for the sense of smell. Also houses the language cortex usually in left hemisphere and participates in recognition and interpretation of language. The amygdala and hippocampus (limbic system) connect to the temporal lobe and aid in memory formation related to emotions, the sense of smell and sound.

The Occipital Lobe - This lobe contains the primary **visual cortex** for visual information interpretation. The eyes transmit images to the visual cortex, which then determines colors, identify objects, shapes, and other aspects of visual perception. Visual information is sent to the parietal lobes and temporal lobes for further processing. The occipital lobe is also for reading comprehension; depth perception; recognition of object movement. The parietal and temporal lobes use visual info to perform tasks like as opening a door and connecting visuals with retained memories.

The Insula Lobe – A key role is **visceral** perception or awareness of internal organs and various bodily states. When the bladder is empty we are not consciously aware of it, but when it becomes full, we become aware of it. The **gustatory cortex** is responsible for **taste** perception, located in the insula the frontal lobes. The insular lobe also enables us to read our own emotions and be aware of them.

Vocabulary for Brain Anatomy

Sulcus (sulci) – grooves on surface of cerebrum.

Gyrus (gyri) – fold of brain tissue between sulci.

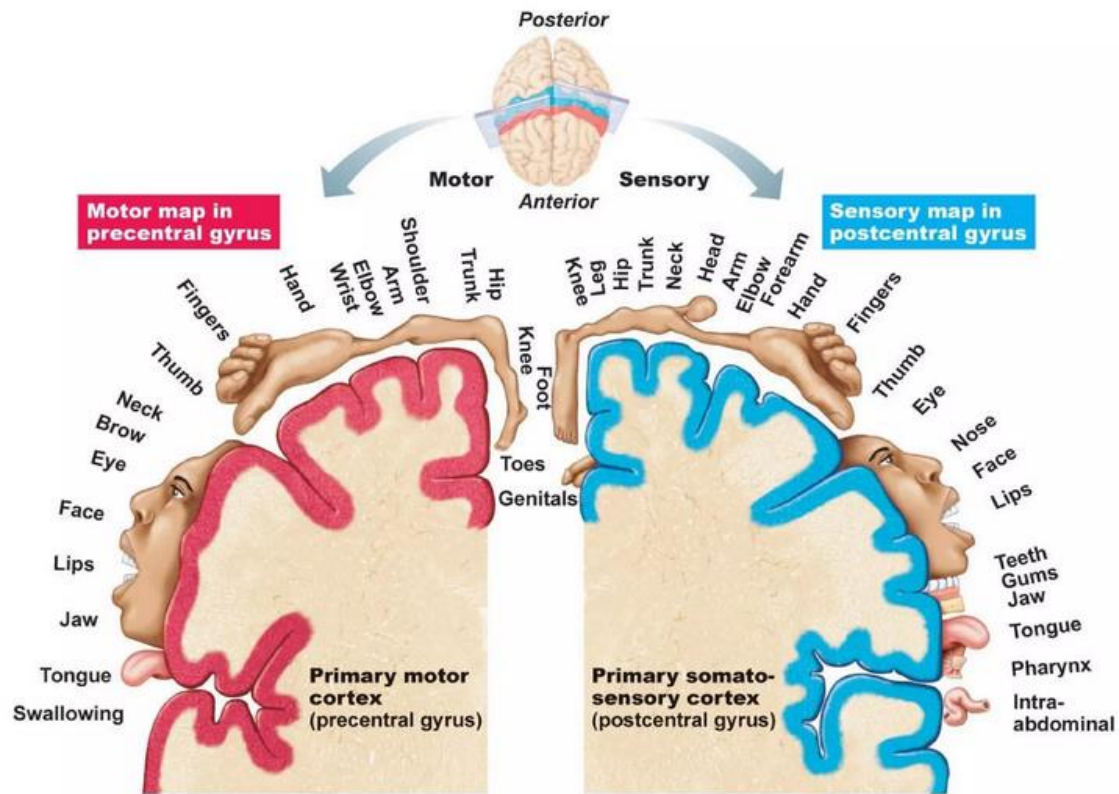
Fissure - deep groove, separating hemispheres.

There are three (3) kinds of cerebral functional area:

- 1) Sensory areas – for receiving incoming sensory information.
- 2) Association areas – for analysis and placing information into context.
- 3) Motor areas – for sending out a response from the cerebrum to lower levels.

Two significant gyri on Cerebrum:

- On Frontal Lobe: Precentral gyrus (motor). This region is the Primary Motor Cortex.
- On Parietal Lobe: Postcentral gyrus (sensory). This region is the Primary Somatosensory Cortex.



General Anatomy of Cerebrum - there are **2 Hemispheres** - Left and Right.



The Left Hemisphere

Controls writing, movement of the right side of body. Usually dominant in language and tasks that involve symbolic reasoning. Language, logic, analytical, sequential, verbal tasks (**fragmentary** information processing).

The Right Hemisphere

Controls touch, movement of the left side of body. Typically superior at non-verbal, visual and spatial tasks. Spatial perception, artistic and musical endeavors (**holistic** information processing).

Cerebral Communication: The major groups of axon fibers and tracts of the central white matter.

a) Association Fibers - are axons (fibers) connecting different cortical areas on the same side of the cerebrum to each other, that is, within the same hemisphere (L or R). Short association fibers like the **arcuate fibers** connect adjacent gyri. Long association fibers, like the **longitudinal fibers** connect distant part of the cerebral cortices within the hemisphere.

b) Commissural Fibers - connect an area in one hemisphere with an area in the opposite hemisphere. The **corpus callosum** is the largest set of commissural fibers in the brain, having from 200 to 300 million axons crossing from one hemisphere to the other. There are two much smaller but important examples called **the anterior commissure** and the **posterior commissure**.

c) Projection Fibers - also known as projection *tracts* of the brain are a type of white matter tract that connects the cortex with other areas in the CNS, e.g. deep nuclei, brainstem, cerebellum or spine. They may be **efferent (motor)**, which can sometimes be called 'descending' tracts, or **afferent tracts (sensory)** which can sometimes be called 'ascending' tracts.

The **Reticular System** - widespread connections, ideal for arousal of the brain as a whole. The **Reticular activating system (RAS)** - Maintains consciousness and alertness. Functions in sleep and arousal from sleep. This RAS is predominantly located in the Pons and the MO. When aroused, it sends signals from the pons and MO "up" to the higher centers in the brain for conscious awareness.

The Limbic System – The Emotional Brain

Still within the **cerebrum**, the **limbic system** is a group of structures on the medial aspect of each hemisphere and the **diencephalon**. It is more of a functional system than an anatomical one. The limbic system is the "emotional brain", participating in the creation of emotional states such as **fear, pleasure, anger, affection, arousal**, etc. and processing vivid memories associated with those states.

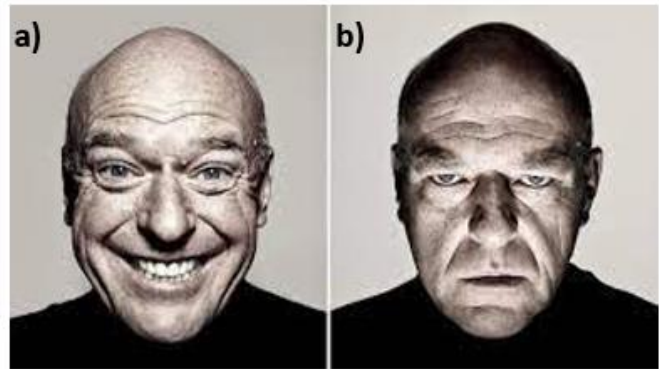
The Cingulate Gyrus is an arch-shaped convolution situated just above the corpus callosum, on the medial aspect of the cerebral hemispheres. Involved in information processing for decision making, planning, allows us to shift between thoughts and inter-relate them. It also interprets pain as unpleasant, an integral part of learning and learned avoidance practice.

The Hippocampus is a complex brain structure embedded deep in the **temporal lobe**. It is thought to have a major role in learning and memory. It's named after its resemblance to a type of **sea-horse**. This structure is described as *plastic*, where **neuroplasticity** is the ability of the brain to create and reorganize new synaptic connections, especially in response to **learning** or after experiencing injury, since the hippocampus can become damaged by various stimuli. For example, high, prolonged levels of **cortisol** (known as the stress hormone) are associated with shrinkage of the hippocampus. Another way to think of this is that worrying too much can shrivel your brain. So worry less.

This area has a role in **spatial processing** and navigation, integrating spatial relationships and memories. This may explain why some people have a better sense of direction than others, in that their hippocampus is more integrated with their other senses than others. So let them have the map, it's just better for everyone. It also functions in consolidating information and memories during restorative sleep.

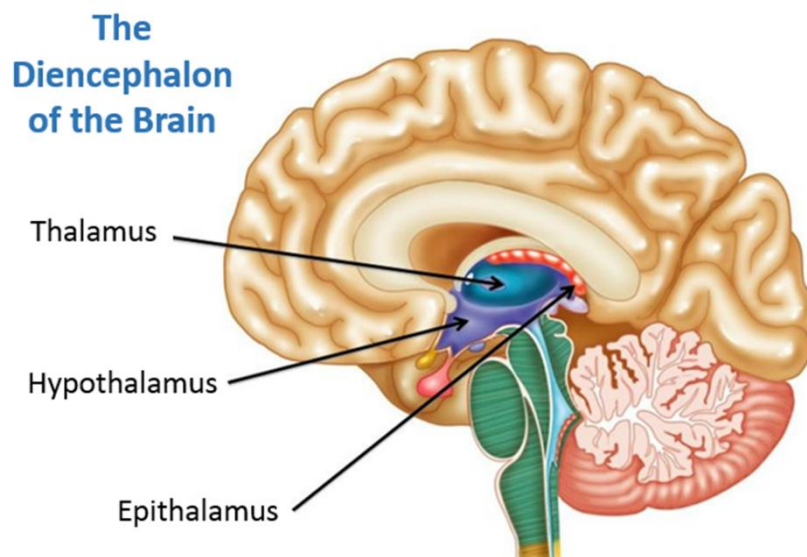
The Amygdala takes its name after the almond-shaped nuclei that is nestled within the **temporal lobe**, it

is part of a collection of nuclei located deep in the temporal lobe. It appears to have a primary role in detecting and processing threatening stimuli, especially **menacing glances** or faces that represent **expressions of fear**. As a consequence, the amygdala activates areas involved in preparation for motor functions of **fight or flight**, i.e., the **sympathetic division** of the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The amygdala is involved in tying emotional meaning to our reactions. It's not all about fear, the amygdala also plays an important role in the storage and retrieval of **positive emotional memories**, such as **positive facial recognition** linked to emotional happiness from seeing, e.g., your grandmother's face. As an, see the two facial expressions **a)** and **b)** in the image above (right). Which do you think would trigger the amygdala to fire because it detects possible danger? Like **b)**, right? However it is worth noting that the amygdala could still be triggered by **a)**, if you recognized this face as someone you have a very positive emotional connection with.



2. Diencephalon

= 1) Epithalamus, 2) Thalamus and 3) Hypothalamus



1) Epithalamus includes the pineal gland (body). Secretes hormone melatonin, under influence of the hypothalamus. Dimethyl-tryptamine (DMT) is also released from Pineal gland. Note: The significant Blue Light emitted from tv, computer and phone screens blocks the hormone melatonin, therefore suppresses your body's ability to prepare for sleep.

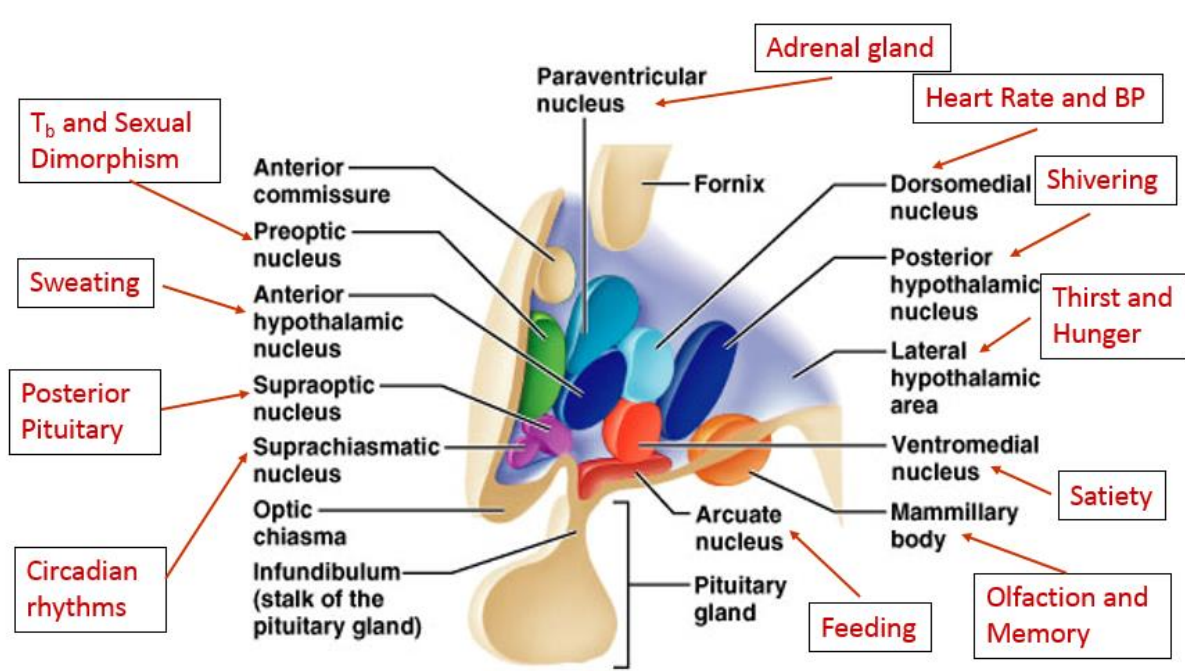
2) Thalamus makes up 80% of the diencephalon. Contains ~ a dozen major nuclei which act as the "gateway" to cerebral cortex. Afferent impulses converge on thalamus. Nuclei organize and amplify or tone down signals.

3) Hypothalamus controls and regulates many important functions of the body, including:

1) Control of the Autonomic Nervous System - adjusts, coordinates, and integrates the A.N.S. centers in the brain that regulate heart rate, blood pressure, bronchiole diameter, sweat glands, G.I. tract activity, etc. It does this via the Parasympathetic and Sympathetic divisions of the A.N.S.

2) Control of Emotional Responses - in association with the limbic system, it forms part of the emotional brain. Regions involved in fear, pleasure, rage and sex drive are located in the hypothalamus.

3) Regulation of Body Temperature - the body's thermostat and set point is located in the hypothalamus. There are also two (2) centers in the hypothalamus that respond to changes in the set point for body temperature.



1. Heat-losing Center: activation of this center causes sweating and cutaneous vasodilation.
2. Heat-promoting Center: activation of this center causes shivering and cutaneous vasoconstriction.

4) Regulation of Hunger and Thirst Sensations - hypothalamus contains centers that regulate eating and drinking behavior the feeding and thirst centers*.

Feeding Center: this center is always active and stimulates hunger which is 'fed' by eating.

Satiety Center: stimulated when satisfied, this inhibits the always hungry feeding center.

Thirst Center: Osmoreceptors detect changes in osmotic pressure of blood, ECF, and when tonicity of bloody fluids go above 310 mOsm, this in part stimulates the thirst response.

**Note: The one region of the brain where the protective Blood Brain Barrier is missing is the hypothalamus. This is because the hypothalamus must be in direct contact with systemic blood in order to assess the condition of blood, including water concentration, levels of nutrients, and temperature.*

5) Control of the Endocrine System – the hypothalamus controls the release of pituitary hormones. It controls the anterior pituitary gland, when the hypothalamus releases hormones, it can stimulate or inhibit the release of other hormones from the pituitary (7 hormones). Also, it makes the 2 hormones (oxytocin and antidiuretic hormone (ADH)) that are stored in the posterior pituitary and released when signaled. All of these hormones regulate many other organs in the body.

3. Midbrain

The **midbrain** (also called the **mesencephalon**), is part of the **brainstem** (= midbrain, pons and medulla oblongata). It connects the hindbrain and the forebrain.

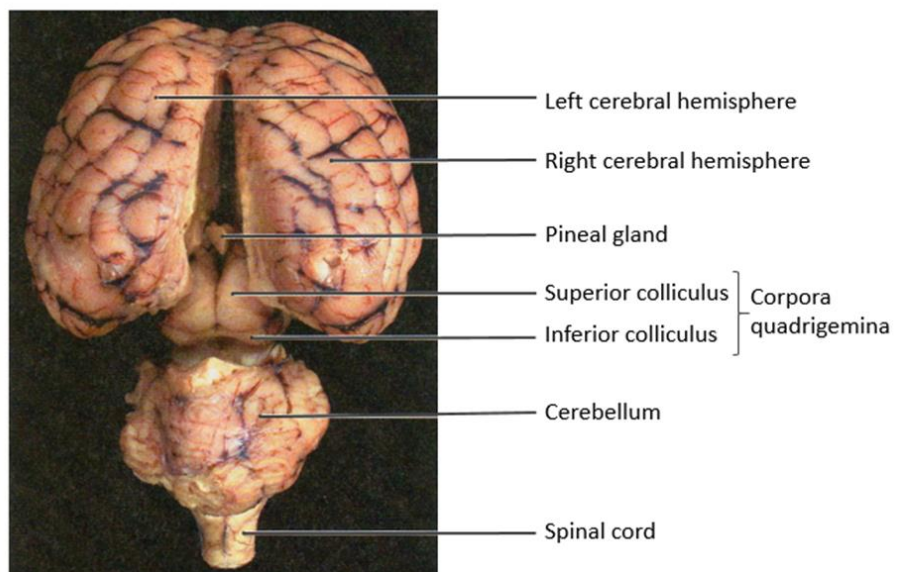
A major function of the midbrain is to aid in body movement, especially movements of the **eye**, as well as **visual** and **auditory** processing. Damage to an area called the **substantia nigra** of the midbrain has been linked to Parkinson's disease.

Portions of the midbrain receive visual and auditory input from the medulla oblongata in relation to protective **cranial reflexes**. The **corpora quadrigemina** of the midbrain is composed of four bodies, and contains the **superior colliculi** (the top two bodies) which are involved in **vision** processing and reflexes. The **inferior colliculi** (the lower two bodies) are involved in **auditory** processing and reflexes. Examples of these types of reflexes are common, for instance if you are walking along the street and hear tires dramatically screeching, you'll **automatically** and **rapidly** turn toward the origin of the sound, often with a defensive or protective posture. Or if your sister throws a wadded up piece of paper at your face when you were not expecting it, automatically your eyes will close, and your arms and hands will attempt to block the belligerent object coming your way

Functions of the midbrain include:

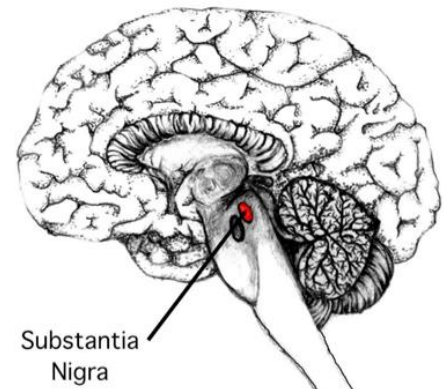
- Controlling Responses to sight
- Hearing and visual reflexes
- Eye Movement
- Pupil Dilation
- Regulating Skeletal Muscle (Body) Movement

Posterior view of a real Brain



In the midbrain is the **substantia nigra** (meaning 'black substance'), the **corpora quadrigemina** (meaning 2 sets of twin bodies), and origins for the **oculomotor** (eye muscle) and **trochlear** (pulley) cranial nerves, which control the movements of the eyeball.

- The **substantia nigra** has fibers that connect with the frontal lobe and other areas of the brain to coordinate and control body movement. Many neurons in the substantia nigra coordinating muscle movement are **dopaminergic** (release dopamine). If high levels (60-80%) of dopaminergic cells degenerate, this may result in **Parkinson's disease** - the loss of motor control and coordination. It is characterized by slow jerky movements; tremors of the face and hands; muscle rigidity; and great difficulty initiating voluntary movements.

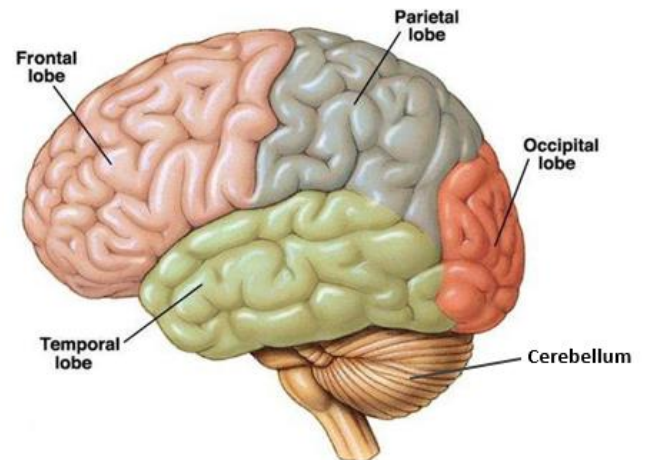


- The **corpora quadrigemina** ('4 bodies') are located in the midbrain. The top two bodies are called the **superior colliculi** and these are involved in **vision** processing and reflexes. The other pair of bodies are called the **inferior colliculi** and these are involved in **auditory** processing and reflexes.

4. Cerebellum

The cerebellum is located in the lower posterior of the brain, and the word means 'little brain'.

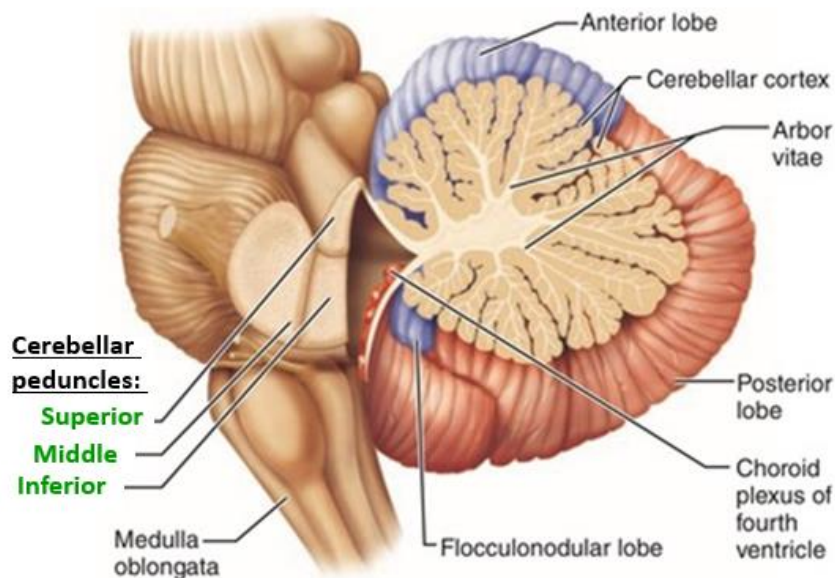
The cerebellum ("little brain") is a structure that is located at the back of the brain, underlying the occipital and temporal lobes of the cerebral cortex. The cerebellum accounts for about 10% of the total brain's volume, yet contains over 50% of the total number of neurons in the brain.



The outer portion of the cerebellum contains neurons, and the inner has tracts myelinated axons called the arbor vitae (meaning 'tree of life') because of its resemblance to branching tree, see image below. These communicates with the cerebral cortex. In basic terms the primary functions of the cerebellum are the control of motor skills such as **balance, coordination, and postural reflexes**.

The **cerebral peduncles** (which means little feet) are key in receiving and relaying information to other areas very quickly that are required for refining body movements, learning new skilled routines, and receiving information from the proprioceptors all over the body and converting into a dynamic spatial map of body part locations to maintenance balance and posture.

Cerebellum and Peduncles



The Cerebellar Peduncles:

Superior cerebellar peduncle are tracts (white matter) connecting to **cerebellum** to the **midbrain**.

Middle cerebellar peduncle are tracts connecting the **cerebellum** to the **pons**. It receives most of its input from the pons from the **pontine nuclei**. The input to the pons is from the **cerebral cortex**, which is relayed from the pontine nuclei via transverse pontine fibers to the **cerebellum**.

Inferior cerebellar peduncle are tracts integrating sensory input from **proprioceptors** with motor **vestibular** (balance) input for maintenance of **balance** and **posture**.

Two very important functions of the cerebellum are:

1) Controls postural reflexes of muscles in body.

That is, it coordinates rapid, automatic adjustments to body parts in order to maintain equilibrium. The coordination of the cerebellum what is responsible for **quickly regaining your balance** if you trip and start to fall. Receptors called **proprioceptors** are located in joints, muscles, tendons and ligaments. They deliver sensory information regarding the relative position of various body parts to the **cerebellum**. The reason you may flail your arms out perhaps rather ignominiously in those times, is that the cerebellum is constantly aware of where the body's limbs are in space and can very quickly calculate where they need to go to re-establish balance, and puts that plan in action without your conscious input. Recall that a **reflex** is a rapid, automated, stereotyped response to a stimulus, usually protective.

2) Produces skilled movements.

The cerebellum is heavily involved in implementing routines for fine-tuned movements. What this means is that it takes an activity that initially is controlled or instigated at the conscious level, and after **much repetition** of this activity, it can be refined into a learned **skilled routine**., meaning done now (after all the practice) with little to no conscious thought involved in the activity. Examples are commonplace in everyday life, for example tying shoe laces. At one point this was a complex task that required conscious attention, but mostly we have that task automated as we develop. Other examples include driving, or being in the unenviable position of teaching your younger sister how to drive a stick shift in an old French car. Playing an instrument. Studying for an exam? The action, whatever it is, is practiced **repeatedly** until it becomes routine (subconscious). This then reduces the need for conscious attention to the task.

The cerebellum gets incoming information from **proprioceptors**, a type of sensory receptor found in movable joints, tendons, ligaments and muscle tissue. Using the information from proprioceptors in the body, the cerebellum can determine the relative position of various body parts and compares motor commands and intended movements with the actual position of the body part (legs, arms). In this way, it can perform any adjustments needed to change the direction or make the movement (action) in a smooth and coordinated way to meet the task.

5. Pons

The pons (which means bridge) plays a role in the regulation of the respiratory system. Contains two 'pontine' respiratory centers: **1)** the pneumotaxic center and **2)** the apneustic center. These two centers will be discussed in much greater detail in the respiratory system section.

The pons is not responsible for the rhythm of breathing (the medulla oblongata is) but it controls the changes in depth of breathing and the fine tuning of the rhythm of breathing that is set by the medulla oblongata. The pons also prevents over inflation of the lungs, and is therefore protective. The pons is also thought to be an active component to rapid eye movement (REM) sleep.

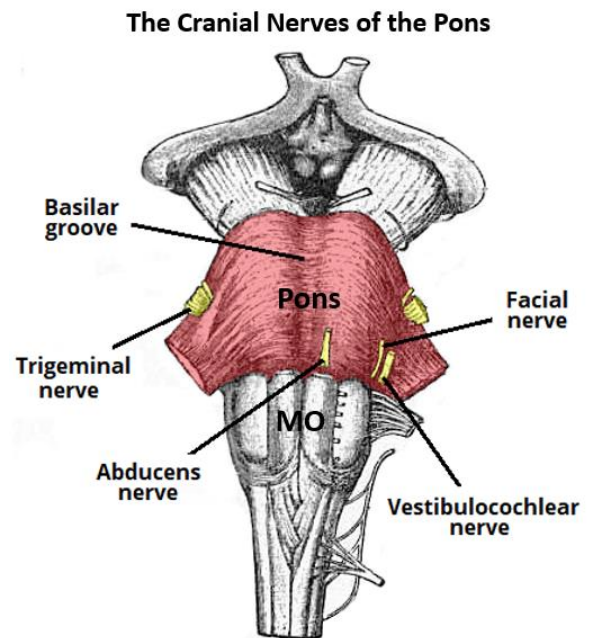
Pons and Cranial Nerves

The pons has 4 cranial nerves that are associated with its function, covering a range of roles, such as hearing, balance and equilibrium, gustation or taste, as well as touch and pain and facial sensations all from incoming sensory fibers. They also send motor fibers out to participate in eye movement, facial expressions, chewing, swallowing, urination, and the secretion of saliva and tears.

There are four cranial nerves that originate from the pons anatomically:

- The Trigeminal nerve, Cranial Neve V
- The Abducens nerve, Cranial Neve VI
- The Facial nerve, Cranial Neve VII
- The Vestibulocochlear nerve, Cranial Neve VIII

To be specific, the only cranial nerve that is directly associated 'functionally with the pons is the **trigeminal nerve** (cranial nerve V). This is the largest of the 12 pairs of cranial nerves and functions both to innervate motor and receive sensory information from three branches that cover the face. There are also three other cranial nerves are located at the pons-medullary junction (where the pons and medulla meet). They are the **abducens nerve** (cranial nerve VI), this controls the lateral rectus extrinsic eye muscle and 'abducts' the eyeball to look laterally (outward). The **facial nerve** (cranial nerve VII) which innervates muscles of facial expression and is also responsible for taste sensation on the first one third of the tongue. Finally, the **vestibulocochlear nerve** (cranial nerve VIII) which is almost exclusively a sensory nerve bringing in information from the inner ear, via two branches: The vestibular branch for balance and equilibrium; and the cochlear branch for sound sensations in the cochlea.



6. Medulla Oblongata

The **medulla oblongata** (MO, or often just called the **medulla**), is the lowest anatomical part of the brain, the lowest portion of the brainstem, and is the last division of the brain before it becomes the **spinal cord**.

The Medulla Oblongata and Cranial Nerves

The last four of the cranial nerves are significantly intertwined in the functions of the medulla. The **glossopharyngeal nerve** (IX) delivers taste sensation from posterior one-third of tongue to the Medulla, and sensation from the pharynx, it senses blood pressure and O₂ and CO₂ content from the carotid artery. Parasympathetic fibers activate parotid salivary gland. It sends nerve fibers to elevate the pharynx when swallowing. The **vagus nerve** (X) motor fibers from the medulla descend to the neck for swallowing, controlling muscle of larynx; parasympathetic fibers regulate cardiac, pulmonary, and part of gastrointestinal activities. It brings sensation from the gastrointestinal tract back to the medulla as well as information for blood pressure (carotid sinus) and chemistry (carotid and aortic bodies). The **accessory nerve** (XI) comes from a union of cranial and spinal roots and emerges from the medulla to innervate the sternocleidomastoid and the trapezius to contribute to elevation of shoulders (shrugging). Also supplies motor fibers to the larynx, pharynx and soft palate. And finally, the **hypoglossal nerve** (XII) is a motor nerve from the medulla with fibers going to the intrinsic and extrinsic muscles of the tongue. It's

concerned with food mixing and manipulation and also for movements of the tongue involved in speech and swallowing.

The Vital Center of the MO

The medulla oblongata plays a critical role in transmitting signals between the spinal cord and the higher parts of the brain and in controlling autonomic activities, such as heartbeat and respiration. It houses some very important visceral centers that are also called **vital centers**, names because they regulate function that are vital to survival. The three vital centers are:

1) The Cardiac Center – Is the center which provides modulation and fine tuning of the heart rate and the strength (or force) of myocardial contractility. These two elements of cardiac activity generate **cardiac output**. This center adjusts the force and rate of the heartbeat when needed to meet metabolic needs of the body. This is mostly carried out by the **autonomic nervous system (ANS)**, where the **parasympathetic** division slows the heart rate and the **sympathetic** division increases both the heart rate and the force of contraction.

2) The Vasomotor Center – This center regulates the **diameter** of peripheral **blood vessels** and therefore exerts an enormous influence on **systemic blood pressure** and **blood flow**. When blood vessels are constricted, this decreases blood flow but increases blood pressure. When blood vessels are dilated this increases blood flow but decreases blood pressure. For the most part, sympathetic division of ANS controls blood vessel diameter, and most vasculature of the body. The greater the sympathetic stimulation, the more the vasoconstriction (if alpha receptors present).

3) The Respiratory Center – This center is for the maintenance and control steady rhythm breathing as regular rates during times of eupnea, which is quiet breathing at rest. This is primarily done through the control of the diaphragm muscle, that large dome-shaped skeletal muscle immediately below the lungs. The diaphragm is controlled by the **phrenic nerve** that innervated this muscle to contract for inspiration.

Sensory receptors located inside blood vessels that measure blood pressure (**baroreceptors**) and blood chemistry (**carotid and aortic bodies**) relay this information to the medulla oblongata (integrations center) so that it can monitor and adjust heart activity and the blood flow to individual parts of the body . It also regulates respiration rate based on incoming information and in this capacity monitors blood acidity. The medulla oblongata has several additional centers that regulate **sneezing, coughing, hiccupping, swallowing** and **vomiting**. For the most part, all of these response are protective.

The Spinal Nerves and Plexuses

In humans, the thirty-one pairs of spinal nerves are grouped as follows: eight cervical, twelve thoracic, five lumbar, five sacral, and one coccygeal. Spinal nerves are mixed nerves that leave the vertebral canal through intervertebral foramina and divide into several branches. *Dorsal rami* of spinal nerves supply structures along the dorsal (posterior) aspects of the vertebral column. *Ventral rami* of spinal nerves tend to join each other and then split again, forming a network, or plexus, of nerves innervating the ventral (anterior) and lateral sides of the torso.

The rami communicantes consist of two branches (an unmyelinated gray ramus and a myelinated white ramus) that connect spinal nerves to a sympathetic ganglion, which is part of the autonomic nervous system (ANS).

A **Plexus** is a rearrangement of the spinal nerves into a functional grouping. There are four plexuses of spinal nerves: *cervical*, *brachial*, *lumbar*, and *sacral*. The latter two are often referred to as a single plexus, the *lumbosacral plexus*.

1. Cervical plexus

The cervical plexus is positioned deep on either side of the neck. It is formed by the ventral rami of the first four cervical nerves (C₁-C₄) and a portion of C₅. Fibers from C₃-C₅ unite to become the paired *phrenic nerves*, sending motor impulses to the diaphragm muscles that contract during inspiration

2. Brachial plexus

The brachial plexus is formed by the ventral rami of C₅-T₁. Five major nerves (axillary, radial, musculocutaneous, ulnar and median) and several smaller ones arise from the brachial plexus.

3. Lumbar and Sacral plexuses

The lumbar and sacral plexuses are composed of spinal nerves from lumbar 1 to sacral 4 (L₁-S₄). The sciatic nerve is the largest nerve arising from the sacral plexus and in fact, is the largest nerve in the body.

Branches of Brachial Plexus (selected nerves)

- 1) Axillary n. from Posterior cord (C₅,C₆). *Innervation*: Skin of shoulder; shoulder joint, deltoid and teres minor muscles.
- 2) Radial n. from Posterior cord (C₅- T₁). *Innervation*: Skin of posterior lateral surface of arm, forearm, and hand; extensor muscles of posterior upper arm and forearm (triceps brachii, supinator, anconeus, brachioradialis, extensor carpi radialis brevis and longus, extensor carpi ulnaris).
- 3) Musculocutaneous n. from Lateral cord (C₅₋₇). *Innervation*: Skin of lateral surface of forearm; muscles of anterior upper arm (coracobrachialis, biceps brachii, brachialis).
- 4) Ulnar n. from Medial cord (C₈,T₁). *Innervation*: Skin of medial third of hand; flexor muscles of anterior forearm (flexor carpi ulnaris, flexor digitorum), medial palm, and intrinsic flexor muscles of the hand.
- 5) Median n. from Medial cord (C₆-T₁). *Innervation*: Skin of lateral two-thirds of hand; flexor muscles of anterior forearm, lateral palm.

Branches of Lumbar Plexus (selected nerves)

- 1) Genitofemoral n. from L₁,L₂. *Innervation*: Skin of middle anterior surface of thigh, scrotum in male, and labia majora in female; cremaster muscle in male.
- 2) Femoral from L₂-L₄. *Innervation*: Skin of anterior and medial aspect of thigh and medial aspect of leg and foot; anterior muscle of thigh (iliacus, psoas major, pectineus, rectus femoris, sartorius) and extensor muscles of leg (rectus femoris, vastus lateralis, vastus medialis, vastus intermedius).
- 3) Obturator n. from L₂-L₄. *Innervation*: Skin of medial aspect of thigh; adductor muscles of leg (external obturator, pectineus, adductor longus, adductor brevis, adductor magnus, gracilis)
- 4) Saphenous n. from L₂-L₄. *Innervation*: Skin of medial aspect of leg.

Branches of Sacral Plexus (selected nerves)

1) Sciatic n. from L₄-S₃. Composed of two nerves (tibial and common peroneal) that are encased within the sciatic sheath, splits into two portions at popliteal fossa; *Innervation*: branches from sciatic in thigh region to hamstring muscles (biceps femoris, semitendinosus, semimembranosus) and adductor magnus.

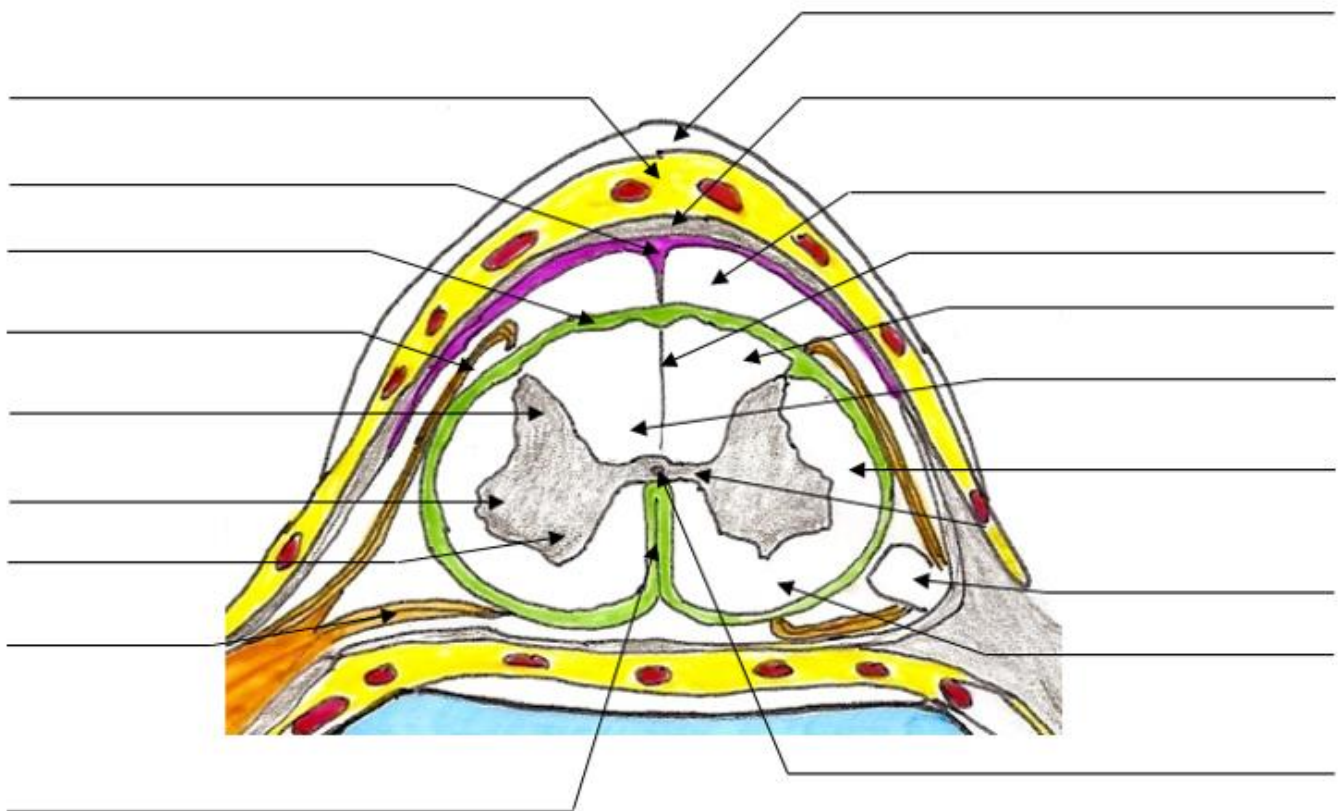
2) Tibial (sural, medial and lateral plantar) L₄-S₃. *Innervation*: Skin of posterior surface of leg and sole of foot; muscle innervation includes gastrocnemius, soleus, flexor digitorum longus, tibialis posterior, popliteus, and intrinsic muscles of the foot.

3) Common Peroneal n. (superficial and deep peroneal) from L₄-S₂. *Innervation*: Skin of anterior surface of the leg and dorsum of foot; muscle innervation includes peroneus tertius, brevis and longus, tibialis anterior, extensor hallucis longus, extensor digitorum longus and brevis.

4) Pudendal n. from S₂-S₄. *Innervation*: Skin of penis and scrotum in male and skin of clitoris, labia majora, labia minora, and lower vagina in female; muscles of perineum.

The Spinal Cord

1. Label this drawing of a cross section of the spinal cord and the meninges. Include the following structures: central canal, anterior median fissure, posterior median sulcus, ventral grey horn, dorsal horn, ventral root, dorsal root, dorsal root ganglion, ventral ramus, dorsal ramus, ventral column, dorsal column and lateral column. Also identify the 3 meningeal layers and the spaces they create.



Additional Brain Structures

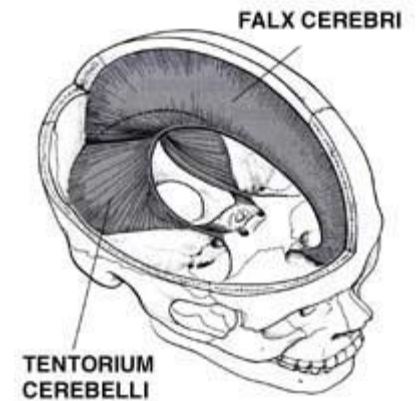
The **falx cerebri** is a fold of dura mater which goes into the longitudinal fissure between the two hemispheres of the cerebrum. This is a structure that divides the Left and Right cerebral hemispheres from each other.

The **falx cerebelli** is a small triangular fold of dura mater, separating the two cerebellar hemispheres.

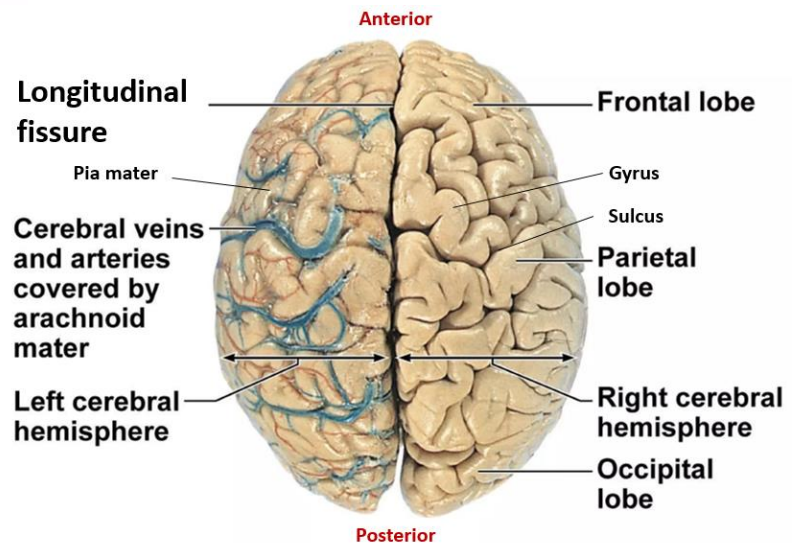
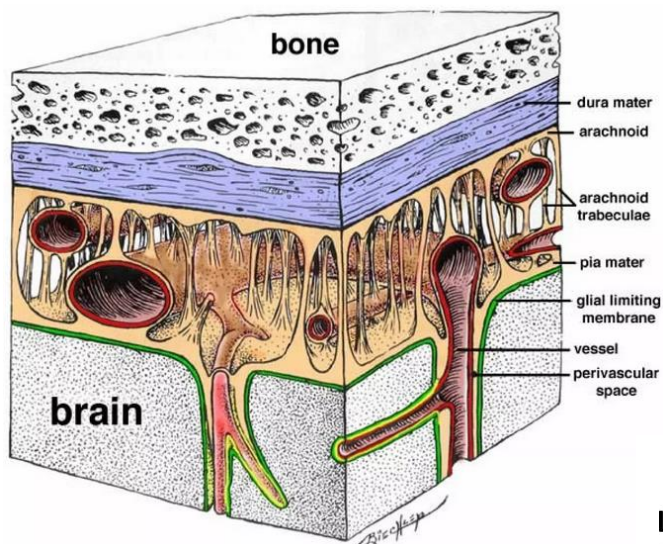
The **tentorium cerebelli** is a fold of dura mater that separates the cerebellum from the cerebrum.

Falx means 'sickle-shaped' in terms of what it looks like; of the cerebrum is 'cerebri' and of the cerebellum is 'cerebelli'. These are just 3 structures that help to partition regions of the brain. Tentorium cerebelli literally means "tent of the cerebellum".

To the right is a diagram I found online to help visualize these structures.



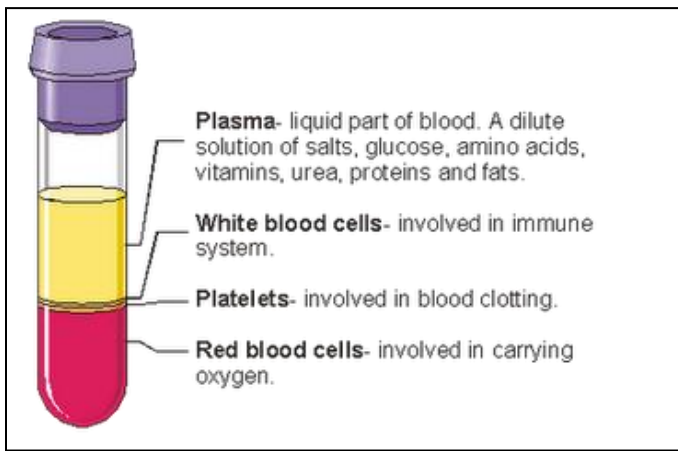
The Cranial Meninges



Cerebrospinal Fluid

Cerebrospinal fluid (**CSF**) is a clear, colorless fluid that is found in the brain and spinal cord. The Central Nervous System (CNS) gets its oxygen and nutrients from CSF and not directly from blood. The CSF is a **filtrate of blood**; this means it is actually filtered from the blood in your cerebral blood vessels.

Everything starts in the **Heart**. The heart delivers blood to all the tissues of the body via blood vessels. Blood goes through the **choroid plexuses** in the brain, which are bundles of blood vessels that are located in the **ventricles of the brain** (described below). The fluid portion of blood is called **plasma** and as blood passes through these choroid plexuses only the plasma portion filters into the ventricles to create this special fluid that bathes and protects the delicate nervous tissue. Cerebrospinal fluid does not normally contain cells, such as red blood cells, or proteins, hence it is colorless.



When blood is spun at high speed in a test tube (image at left), it separates into its fluid component of plasma that sits on top of the heavier cellular components, called the formed elements. Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) is a filtrate of blood (image at right) and is colorless. The sample of CSF shown is from a lumbar puncture procedure.

The Roles of CSF in the CNS

1. Cushions and insulates delicate nervous tissue.

Cerebrospinal fluid acts as a cushion to insulate or buffer the brain, much like how an air bag operates in a car. It protects the delicate brain and spinal cord tissue from traumatic injury when jolted or hit.

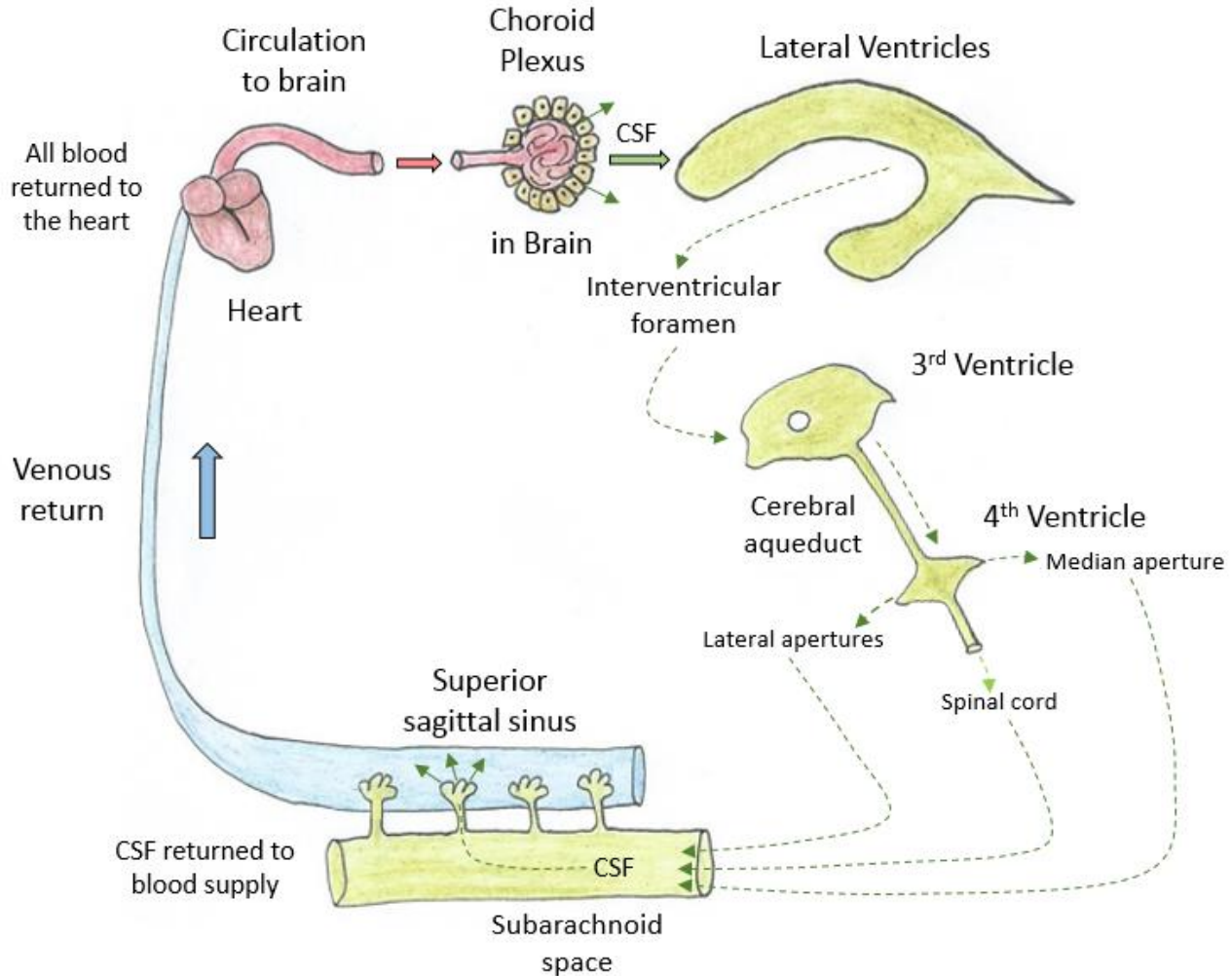
2. Gives Buoyancy to the brain (“floats” in CSF).

The mass of the adult human brain is approximately 1,400 grams (less than 3 lbs). This is heavy when sitting on top of the cranial bones. Since CSF is very salty it allows the brain to be suspended in the CSF, such that the weight of brain becomes equivalent to a mass of about 25 grams!!! If not for this buoyancy provided by CSF, the brain’s own weight would cut off blood supply and kill neurons in the lower sections.

3. Exchange of gases (O₂ and CO₂), nutrients and wastes.

The flow of CSF in the central nervous system (CNS) acts like the blood circulation does for other parts of the body, that is, it acts to exchange vital nutrients (glucose, fatty acids, amino acids, minerals), gases (O₂ in and CO₂ out) and metabolic wastes. CSF thereby regulates the exchange and metabolism of the CNS.

Cerebrospinal Fluid Circulation



The Creation and Flow of Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF)

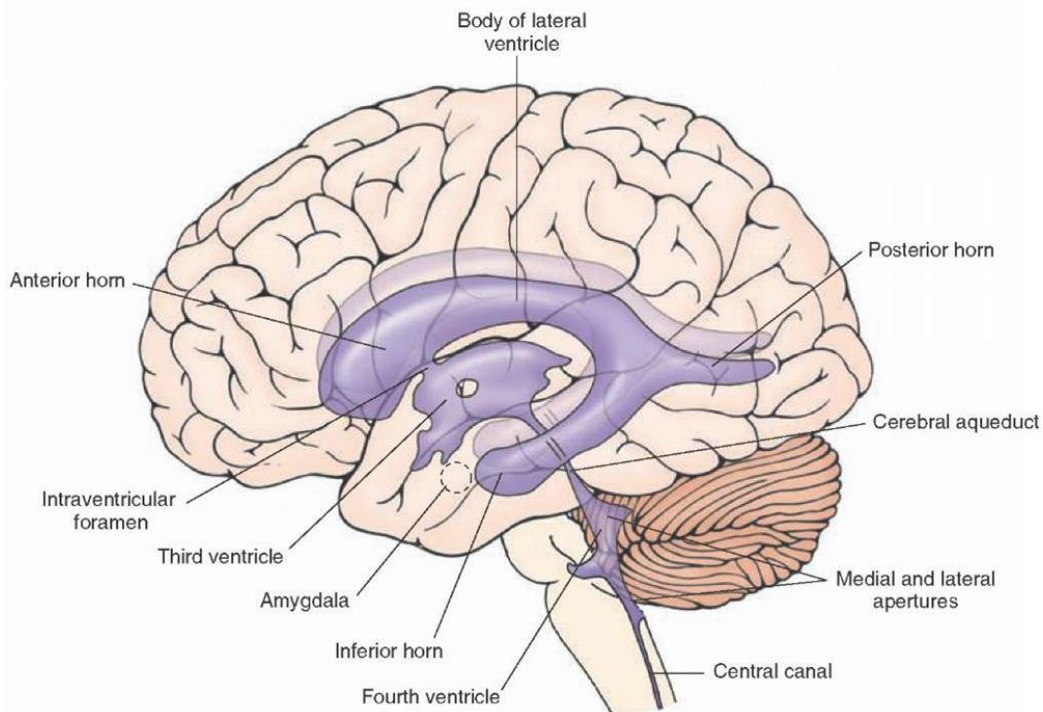
Ventricles of the brain are fluid filled chambers inside the brain. Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) is created as a filtrate of the blood from the **choroid plexuses** which are present at every **ventricle** of the brain. The word **choroid** loosely means 'vascular' and plexuses means 'network', so the choroid plexuses are a network of blood vessels in the brain that are surrounded by ependymal cells which help to produce most of the CSF.

There are 4 ventricles of the brain: The lateral ventricles (1 and 2); the 3rd ventricle; and the 4th ventricle (see diagram above).

CSF is made and found in the **ventricles** inside the brain, in the **subarachnoid space** of the cranial and spinal meninges, and in the **central canal** of the spinal cord. In an adult there is usually about 140 to 170ml (average of **150ml**) of CSF in circulation at any one time within in the Central Nervous System (CNS). For children it ranges from 20 to 60 ml. In adults, there is approximately **500ml** of CSF made per day.

The basic circulation of CSF starts at the choroid plexuses of the two large **lateral ventricles** (located in the cerebrum). From here, the CSF passes through the **interventricular foramen** (these are not holes but connecting tubes) which deliver CSF to the **3rd ventricle**. The CSF then goes into the **cerebral aqueduct** on

its way to the **4th ventricle**, which is located down by the cerebellum, pons and medulla oblongata (MO). The CSF then exits the 4th ventricle into the **subarachnoid space** or into the **central canal** through 3 apertures (openings) at the 4th ventricle - one **median aperture** and two **lateral apertures**.



Once the CSF is in the subarachnoid space, it can circulate all around the brain and spinal cord. Finally, the CSF needs to go back to where it came from – it started from blood and so needs to be returned to the blood supply.

Since CSF is a filtrate of blood, it can be re-mixed with the blood and taken back to the heart for the process to start all over again from the beginning (circulate means “makes a circle”). The CSF that is in the subarachnoid space returns to the vascular system via **arachnoid villi** (or granulations) – these are connections from the subarachnoid space into the **dural venous sinuses**.

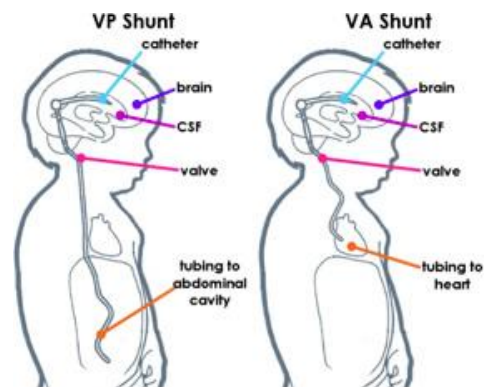
Remember a **sinus** in the cardiovascular system is a **large blood vessel, usually a vein**, and these veins are sandwiched in between the two layers of the cranial dura mater. Once the CSF enters the large dural sinuses (an example is the *superior sagittal sinus*) it is reunited with blood in the venous circulation and it flows back to the heart. That is the last part of the circulation, as it goes back to where it started. This process will repeat, where the choroid plexuses (which exist at all 4 ventricles) continue to make CSF at every ventricle and the CSF flows in the order shown in the drawing on the previous page with the dashed green arrows.

Hydrocephalus (‘water on the brain’) is an abnormal accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) in the ventricles or subarachnoid space of the brain, which may cause increased intracranial pressure (ICP) inside the skull. It can be caused by impaired CSF flow, impaired re-absorption, or excessive production of CSF. Hydrocephalus may lead to enlargement of the cranium if it occurs during development (when fontanels are still present). It can be fatal if ICP is excessively high and not quickly alleviated.



Infant with hydrocephalus; notice how the fontanelles allow for significant expansion of the cranium. Hydrocephalus is often categorized as either **intraventricular** (within the ventricles of the brain) or **extraventricular** (outside of the ventricles of the brain).

Surgical treatments commonly utilize various cerebral shunts that can act as a detour for the blocked fluid circulation. This involves inserting a catheter (tube) into the cerebral ventricles to bypass the obstruction or the malfunctioning arachnoid granulations (villi). This allows for the drainage of excess fluid into other body cavities, where it can be reabsorbed. Most shunts drain the fluid into the peritoneal cavity (**Ventriculo-Peritoneal shunt**); alternative sites include the right atrium (**Ventriculo-Atrial shunt**).



Seen above are the two common shunts to drain excess CSF: The Ventriculo-Peritoneal (VP) shunt, and the right atrium Ventriculo-Atrial (VA) shunt.