1. Arterio-venous malformations are irregular connections between veins and arteries. The capillaries normally serve as the intermediary between veins and arteries, but for some reason, they are missing in AVMs, causing a cluster (a back-up of sorts).

2. Most AVMs occur in the brain and in the spine, but they can occur anywhere.

3. If symptoms of an AVM have not appeared by age 50, they likely will not appear.

4. Women sometimes have issues with an AVM during pregnancy.

5. One of the biggest concerns with AVMs is uncontrolled bleeding (or hemorrhage) that can occur.

6. Although considered “present at birth”, no symptoms or obvious appearance may be found until after birth or later in life.

7. AVMs tend to grow with the person and can become apparent after an accident or during puberty.

8. AVMs are classified, or organized, according to a scale called the Schobinger Staging System.

9. No one knows why AVMs form. Some believe they are genetic.

10. Patients diagnosed with an AVM should seek the medical opinion of someone with experience diagnosing and treating these often complex and problematic lesions.