

Single Umbilical Artery

Umbilical cord

The umbilical cord is connected to your placenta and transports nutrition and oxygen to your baby. It has three vessels: one vein and two arteries. The vein carries blood to your baby. The arteries carry blood and waste away from your baby back to the placenta.

Single Umbilical Artery

Single umbilical artery is when the umbilical cord has only one artery. This condition happens in about 1 in 100 pregnancies. It is more common in pregnancies with multiples (twins, triplets or more). Single umbilical artery is usually found during an ultrasound.

Causes

During your baby's early development, one of the arteries was not able to develop or fully develop. This causes single umbilical artery. The cause of why this happens is unknown.

Risks

Most babies with single umbilical artery are born healthy.

Babies with single umbilical artery are a little more likely to have birth defects, particularly in the kidney and heart. In some cases, babies who have a single umbilical artery and a birth defect may be more likely to have a genetic condition (such as Down Syndrome).

Important: Single umbilical artery by itself is not considered a birth defect.

All babies with single umbilical artery are at risk for not growing as well in the uterus.

What to Expect During Your Pregnancy

Your health care provider will want to check the health of your baby during pregnancy. They may recommend tests such as an:

- **Ultrasound** – This exam can help find problems with the growth and development of your baby, including physical birth defects.
- **Echocardiogram** – This ultrasound will take detailed images of your baby's heart.
- **Amniocentesis** – This test can find chromosome conditions that may be linked to certain birth defects.

