

Patient information

Single umbilical artery

You have received this information leaflet because during your recent ultrasound examination it has been noted that there is a single umbilical artery present in the umbilical cord, as opposed to the usual two.

What does this mean?

The umbilical cord connects your baby to the placenta which circulates blood to and from your baby. Most umbilical cords have one vein and two arteries. The vein carries oxygenated blood and nutrients from the placenta to your baby. The arteries carry deoxygenated blood and waste products away from your baby to the placenta.

Sometimes, there is only one artery in the umbilical cord, instead of the usual two. You may hear this referred to as a 'two vessel cord' or 'single umbilical artery'. This occurs in approximately 1 in 100 pregnancies.

A single umbilical artery can support a pregnancy and in most cases is not a cause for concern.

Sometimes, a single umbilical artery (two vessel cord) can increase the chance of your baby not growing as well as expected. Therefore, it is recommended that you have some additional scans in the pregnancy to monitor your baby's growth.

An additional screening scan called a 'uterine artery doppler' will be offered to you. This measurement looks at the blood flow from your uterine arteries to your uterus and is a good indicator as to whether your baby may grow smaller than expected. This scan will be booked for when you are approximately 23 weeks pregnant. The uterine artery doppler measurement will guide when your growth scans are to commence – this will either be from 28 weeks or from 32 weeks and will then be every 2-4 weeks.

Very rarely, a two-vessel cord can be associated with physical or chromosomal anomalies. If there were any other concerns during your scan regarding your baby's anatomy, this will have been discussed with you by a specialist midwife and appropriate referrals discussed. A two-vessel cord in isolation is not considered a cause for concern.

Contact details

If you have any further questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact the antenatal and newborn screening midwives.

Telephone: 01284 712567

Or email: ANNBscreening@wsh.nhs.uk

Clinical research

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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