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## **Two Vessel Cord**

The normal umbilical cord contains three blood vessels – two arteries, which carry oxygen-rich blood to the baby, and two veins, which return blood to the placenta. Approximately one percent of all live born infants have an umbilical cord that contains only two vessels, as one artery is missing. This variant, called a two vessel cord or single umbilical artery, is almost always identified at the screening ultrasound.

If there are no other abnormalities seen on ultrasound, the baby is likely to be healthy. However, a single umbilical artery is associated with a slight increase in risk for fetal growth restriction and stillbirth. During the third trimester, monthly ultrasounds to assess fetal growth are recommended. Twice weekly non stress tests and weekly ultrasounds for amniotic fluid volumes are done beginning at 32 weeks. Induction of labor after 39 weeks will also be discussed with you.

Two vessel umbilical cords can also be associated with other congenital anomalies (birth defect), especially of the heart or kidneys. If any other abnormalities are found, this may indicate that the baby has a chromosomal abnormality, and your physician will discuss the option of amniocentesis with you.