

Persistent left superior vena cava (single left superior vena cava)

This leaflet gives more information about prenatal (before birth) diagnosis of a single left superior vena cava. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the fetal cardiology team.

The normal heart

The heart is made up of 4 chambers. Blue blood (blood that has delivered oxygen around your body) usually returns to the right side of the heart through 2 main veins:

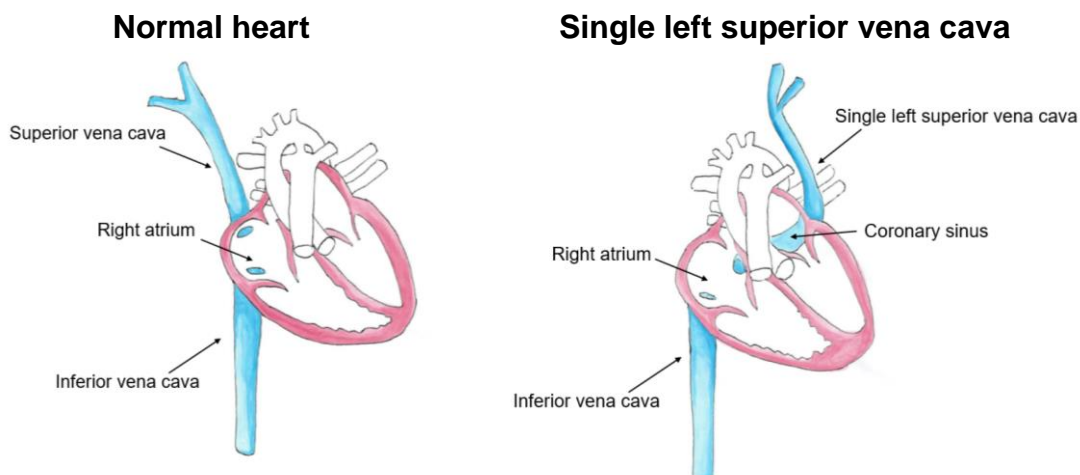
- 1 from the upper body (superior vena cava, SVC)
- 1 from the lower body (inferior vena cava)

These veins are usually on the right side of the body, and drain into a chamber called the right atrium, so that the blood can then go to the lungs.

Persistent left superior vena cava

Your baby's scan shows that the main structure of their heart appears normal, but there is a small difference. We can see that the upper-body vein (SVC) is on the left side of your baby's heart. Even though the vein is on the left, it usually passes through the back of the heart (coronary sinus) which directs it to end in the correct place (the right atrium).

This is a variation of normal, and does not affect how your baby's heart works.



Cause of single left SVC

In the very early stages of development in the womb, all babies have 2 SVCs (1 on each side). As the heart develops, the vein on the left side usually disappears. This is part of the natural development of the heart. Your baby's left-side vein has remained.

Next steps

You should continue to have your pregnancy appointments as normal. There is a very low chance that a single left SVC is a sign that there is a problem elsewhere in your baby. Because of this, we recommend that a fetal medicine specialist does another scan of your baby's body in the next few weeks. We will contact your local team to arrange this.

As your baby's scan has shown something a bit different, we'll review their heart later in your pregnancy to check that the heart structures are growing normally.

The mode and timing of delivery of your baby does not need to be changed because of a single left SVC.

If you have any questions before your next appointment, please contact your clinical nurse specialists (CNS) the details are at end of this leaflet.

After you've had your baby

Before your baby leaves hospital, we will ask the neonatal (baby) doctors to do some checks on your baby, including checking their oxygen levels. If the results are OK, we'll recommend a non-urgent cardiology review, and ask the neonatal team to arrange this.

This follow-up appointment may be at your local hospital or at Evelina London Children's Hospital. If those checks do not show anything new, your baby will not need any further follow-up.

Extremely rarely, the left SVC drains into the left atrium. This might need treatment.

Having a single left SVC which drains normally into the right atrium does not mean that your child will need to follow any restrictions (such as diet or exercise).

Support and more information

Evelina Children's Heart Organisation, offer support for parents with children with heart conditions, **web:** www.echo-evelina.org.uk

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about single left superior vena cava please contact the fetal cardiology CNSs, **phone:** 020 7188 2308, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

For more information on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **web:** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline, **phone:** 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm



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