

VACTERL Association

The VACTERL association is the name for a group of developmental defects that can occur in newborn babies.

The cause is unknown.

Babies with three or more of the following anomalies are identified as having VACTERL.

Vertebral - spine / back bone

This includes abnormalities of the vertebrae and sometimes ribs.

Anorectal

Imperforate anus is the most common abnormality, which can also include a fistula between the rectum and vagina or urethra and bladder. A temporary colostomy will be required until further surgery takes place to form an anal opening.

Cardiac - heart

The most common cardiac abnormality is a ventricular septal defect (VSD) in which there is a hole in the wall that separates the chambers of the heart. Other heart defects may also occur.

Tracheoesophageal Fistula / Oesophageal Atresia (TOF)

TOF involves a connecting join between the trachea (windpipe) and oesophagus (food tube). Oesophageal atresia results in the oesophagus ending with no opening before it reaches the stomach. These abnormalities require early surgical intervention.

Renal - kidneys

The most common renal anomalies include absent, faulty or underdeveloped kidneys or reflux (when wee is forced back from the bladder up to the kidneys).



Limb

Failure in development or absence of the radial bone in the lower arm is the most common limb abnormality. There may also be problems with the feet or legs.

The term VACTERL association is not in itself a diagnosis but the list of anomalies that occur together helps medical professionals to know what to look for.

The severity or combination of the defects can vary considerably from one individual to another.

VACTERL Association Support Group is dedicated to helping families affected by ACTERL/ VATER association based in the UK

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