

Cervical Teratoma

Patient Information Series – What you should know, what you should ask.

This leaflet is to help you understand what cervical teratoma is, what tests you need and what having been diagnosed with cervical teratoma means for you and your baby.

What is a cervical teratoma?

A cervical teratoma is a rare tumor with only 300 cases described in literature. This kind of tumor contains different types of cells that are not in their normal location. These tumors are usually detected in the baby's neck on a routine ultrasound that is done during your pregnancy.

How does it happen?

A cervical teratoma occurs when the cells that form the different layers of the body accidentally migrate to an unusual location in early pregnancy. They continue to divide in the baby's neck to form a mass. This can depend on a genetic cause (error in the chromosomes, where our genes are located), but most often, no explanation is found on why this is happening.

Should I have more tests done?

This kind of tumor can be associated with syndromes such as trisomy 13. (an extra chromosome 13) In this case, there will often be more anomalies detected on ultrasound. A chromosomal analysis of your baby may be recommended by your healthcare provider to further identify any genetic abnormalities. It is also recommended to have follow-up ultrasounds every 2-3 weeks after a diagnosis of cervical teratoma is made to follow up on the growth of the mass and the well-being of your baby. With these scans also the heart function and the fluid around the baby will be checked.

What are the things to watch for during the pregnancy?

Cervical teratomas can be associated with other abnormalities that can be seen by ultrasound. The stomach may be not visible or the baby may have a closed anus or an abnormal heart. Very often a large amount of amniotic fluid develops during pregnancy because the tumour does not allow the baby to swallow the fluid around him

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What does it mean for my baby after it is born?

Depending on the severity of the case, and on the baby's condition, your doctor may discuss with you a termination of pregnancy. Your doctor will also recommend if it is better for the baby to be born in a hospital with experienced specialists to help your baby breathe if the tumor causes problems.

Will it happen again?

There have been no reported cases of recurrence of these tumors in future pregnancies. Early ultrasound to ensure your baby's well being is recommended in all future pregnancies.

What other questions should I ask?

- Are other malformations present?
- What genetic testing is available?
- How often will I have ultrasound examinations done?
- Is surgery during pregnancy an option?
- Where is surgery after pregnancy available for the baby?
- What is the recommended method of delivery for my case?
- Where should I deliver?
- Where will the baby receive the best care after delivery?
- Can I meet in advance the team of doctors that will be looking after my baby following delivery?

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