



Oregon Reproductive Medicine

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FERTILITY JOURNEYS: DONOR EGG IVF WITH GENOMIC SCREENING... WITH OREGON REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE

After nearly ten years trying to build their family, Heather and Brandon are starting the third trimester of Heather's pregnancy. Their 20-week scan has given them a good look at their baby girl and boy who are continuing to develop well.

Heather writes...

We've made it to the start of my third trimester and are all smiles right now!

While nausea has continued to play a significant role in my journey, anti-nausea medications have become my best friend. I've been needing to take anti-nausea medication once every eight hours (three times a day) to help avoid constant vomiting. Food has become challenging. There are very few foods I enjoy with the exception of fruit, smoothies, lemonade and tart candy.

Importantly though, the babies are doing well and both are maintaining an above average heart rate. I cannot feel them moving just yet but have been told by my doctors that they are actively moving and kicking each other. I was told that it is normal for them to kick each other in order to start developing basic capacity for their limbs.

My daily routine is waking up, going to work, coming home to nap, eating take out - because the smell of food lingering in the house makes me nauseous - and heading back to sleep by 10:30 p.m. I will be honest that I have never felt so tired in my life.

I do not feel at all in control of my own body and many of the basic tasks I used to do on a consistent basis seem impossible (washing clothes, tidying up the house, etc.).

Brandon is doing a lot of the research that I am too tired to do. He sends me, on a consistent basis, helpful tips and bits of information and weekly "what to expect" updates.



After much anticipation, our 20-week ultrasound went well and it was amazing to see our babies right there in front of us.

Through these updates we are following the size of each baby and what parts of the anatomy they are starting to develop at each stage. They are also helping us focus on the things we should start to prepare for so that we are properly pacing ourselves through this journey.

As an example, we were given the suggestion of talking about how we will handle life after the birth, making sure I invest in flats for the remainder of my pregnancy and knowing the symptoms and risks of preeclampsia.

After much anticipation, our 20-week ultrasound went well, and it was amazing to see our babies right there in front of us. Because we are having fraternal twins our ultrasound took more time to complete.

Baby A is our girl and she is located closest to my waist. Baby B is our boy and he is higher up and above my belly button.

Our baby girl has been diagnosed with a two-vessel umbilical cord instead of a three vessel cord. Our baby boy has a three-vessel umbilical cord and is the most active.

Most babies' umbilical cords have three blood vessels - one vein, which brings nutrients from the placenta to the baby, and two arteries that bring waste back to the placenta. But a two-vessel cord has just one vein and one artery - that's why the condition is also referred to as having a single umbilical artery (SUA). It's more common than you might think and is the most common abnormality of the umbilical cord.

Our doctor informed us that in most cases, the one artery just makes up for what the missing one would do. However, there's a slight increase in risk of growth problems and a minimal increase in risk of stillbirth. Our doctor has informed us that her weight is currently as should be expected and they will monitor our baby girl closely.

I have been scheduled for several ultrasound follow-ups to ensure they are both doing well. Thus far, they are both flourishing and maintaining an above average weight. We are happy campers!

We are currently in the process of making arrangements for a close to home babymoon with a car ride that will not exceed two and a half hours. Our goal is to stay close to home, enjoy a massage or two and have some time to lounge in a nice pool!

In addition, we are awaiting the invitations for our upcoming baby shower which will take place around the corner from our house on the day of my birthday!

We are excited to send out invitations in the coming days and share my birthday with one of the best gifts we have ever received.



Dr Barbieri comments on Heather and Brandon's journey

The 20-week scan is almost always a much anticipated point in every pregnancy. Not only is it an important milestone for being able to check on foetal development, but also modern ultrasound technology gives expecting parents a good peek at their growing babies.

The precision of modern ultrasounds will have enabled the diagnosis at the 20-week scan of single umbilical artery (SUA) for Heather and Brandon's baby girl. Heather is correct that SUA is the most common congenital abnormality of the umbilical cord. The cause of SAU is a not fully known and there is no scientific consensus on the incidence and clinical significance of SUA in twin compared to singleton pregnancies.

Generally diagnosis of SUA is made during the third trimester. The earlier awareness of SUA for their baby girl will allow Heather's OB/GYN to formulate a protocol for monitoring both babies' development and managing Heather's pregnancy. I am glad that Heather has a schedule for regular ultrasound monitoring.

There is generally a growth in the size of the single artery for an affected baby near the start of the third trimester. Heather's OB/GYN will be watching for this change, and their baby girl's continued increase in weight and a strong heartbeat as key indicators of her healthy development.

I am comforted to know that Heather's OB/GYN has personal experience with twins. A twin pregnancy carries higher risks, so expertise with twin pregnancies and enhanced monitoring is called-for, even more so with the diagnosis of SUA for their baby girl.

We are honoured to have been able to help Heather and Brandon and will be continuing to follow their journey closely. Along with them, we are counting the days now that they are in their third and final trimester.