Renal Agenesis UK

Renal Agenesis UK©

Providing support and information to parents and families who have been affected by a Bilateral Renal Agenesis diagnosis

Registered Scottish Charity SCIO SC051280
www.renalagenesis.org.uk

What is Bilateral Renal Agenesis?

Bilateral Renal Agenesis is a condition where a baby's kidneys fail to develop during pregnancy.

It is not usually detected until a 20 week anomaly scan because the kidneys are such small organs.

Sadly Bilateral Renal Agenesis is a fatal conditon and termed 'Incompatible with life'

At present, in the UK there are no known treatment options therefore parents are asked to decide if they want to continue with their baby's pregnancy or have a termination for medical reasons.

Neither of these decisions is a choice parents want to make for their much loved and wanted baby.

There is no known cause as to why the kidneys fail to develop but in some instances there may be a genetic reason such as a family history of unilateral renal agenesis (one kidney missing) or bilateral renal agenesis..

Bilateral - Affecting both sides
Renal - Kidneys
Agenesis - Failure to develop

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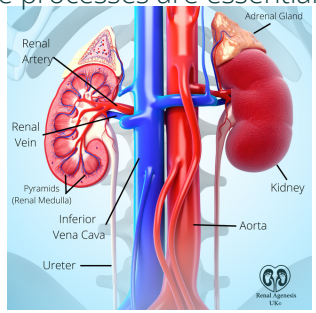
Why are our kidneys so important?

Our kidneys are 2 bean shaped organs that lie on either side of our body and their primary function is to make urine.
However the kidneys are involved in many other important functions.

1. They maintain the volume of water in our bodies.
2. They help to balance salt and mineral levels.
3. They facilitate the removal of waste products such as medication, uric acid and compounds produced from cells in our body which we have no use for.
4. Produce and release a hormone which encourages red blood cells to be made.
5. Produce and release a substance (enzyme) which is important in the long term control of our blood pressure.

Sitting on top of the kidneys are little glands called Adrenal Glands. These are important in our 'Flight or Fight' responses.
They also make hormones our body needs to support our metabolism, immune responses, and which help us deal with stress.

All these processes are essential for life.



What is Amniotic Fluid

Amniotic fluid is the liquid that surrounds and protects a baby during pregnancy.
It has many functions including

1. Facilitating the growth and maturing of the lungs
2. Supports movement within the womb which promotes bone and muscle growth and development.
3. Stops any pressure being placed on the umbilical cord.
4. Antibodies present in amniotic fluid help to fight infection protecting the baby.
5. Helps to develop the digestive system.

During the first 12 weeks of pregnancy amniotic fluid is produced by the body. It is secreted from the placenta, the membranes surrounding the baby and from the mothers circulatory system (heart, blood vessels and blood).

When kidneys are present, a baby should start to produce urine around 10wks gestation then from 12-14 weeks they will begin to swallow the amniotic fluid surrounding them then passing it out creating a continuous cycle.

In confirmed cases of Bilateral Renal Agenesis, because the kidneys are absent, no urine is being produced which means any fluid swallowed by the baby is absorbed rather than passed out resulting the fluid volume surrounding the baby is either low or absent.

Oligohydramnios - when there is too little fluid around the baby.

Anhydramnios - when there is no or nearly no fluid detected around the baby.

Sadly the lack of fluid results in a lung condition called Pulmonary Hypoplasia.

What is Pulmonary Hypoplasia?

Pulmonary Hypoplasia is the term used to describe incomplete development of the lungs.

What this means is that a baby who has low amniotic fluid will have very small, underdeveloped lungs.

Very small lungs will not be able to breathe on their own due to their reduced size and the reduced number of minute structures within the lungs which help to get oxygen into the body.
The lungs are not strong or mature enough to support breathing.

Underdeveloped lungs sadly can not sustain life.



Where to find us

More information about Renal Agenesis UK and Bilateral Renal Agenesis can be found on our website

www.renalagenesis.org.uk .

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