

Our logo has special meaning to our organization. The large and small hands signify diversity. The heart surrounding the hands signifies community, sharing and caring. The solid black line at the bottom of the logo signifies support and a strong foundation. The hands and hearts spreading past the confines of the box signify hope, future research and “thinking outside the box”.



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**Contact us at:**  
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or visit our website  
*www.vacterlnetwork.org*

## Mission Statement

The VACTERL Network was established to provide support to families who have a child born with VACTERL or adults with VACTERL. The purpose of our organization is to share resources, tips, information and support among the families. We are a nationwide resource for individuals to help make the journey with VACTERL as easy as possible.

## About Us

We are a group of families reaching out to other families who have a child born with VACTERL, adults with VACTERL or any individual who may have similar related health issues.

VACTERL has a direct impact on an entire family, including siblings, grandparents, and extended family members. It crosses all areas of life. We intend to address the needs of the entire family and are dedicated to providing the following:

- On-going support
- Assistance in time of crisis
- A resource library of information, ideas and brochures
- Provide parent-to-parent networking
- Promote VACTERL Awareness

This group wants to be a resource for you to help make the journey with a VACTERL child as easy as possible for you, your family and your child. We encourage you to contact us.

## What is VACTERL?

VACTERL (or VATER as it is often referred to) is an acronym, not a disease or a syndrome. It is used to describe the types of anomalies (physical birth defects) children may have when they are born. Some children have the full spectrum of VACTERL, but a child with three or more problems in any combination may be recognized as fitting the VACTERL Association.

If a physician sees at least three anomalies that fit within the VACTERL Association, the doctor should know to look for other related problems. This is important because problems that are identified early can be treated with surgery, medicine, or therapies before the child has major complications. A child with VACTERL Association may be seen by several specialists and have several test done.

Examples of some of the anomalies that may occur are:

- V** – *Vertebrae problems* – abnormally formed vertebrae, tethered spinal cord, extra ribs, missing ribs and tailbone, etc.
- A** – *Anal anomalies/rectal problems* – no anal opening.
- C** – *Cardiac problems* – minor to massive heart problems.
- T** – *Trachea (windpipe)* – improper connections between trachea and esophagus.
- E** – *Esophagus* – part of the esophagus connecting the mouth and stomach is missing or malformed.
- R** – *Renal (kidney)* – abnormal kidney(s).
- L** – *Limb* – various hand, feet and leg problems, missing bone structures are common.

The specific needs will vary for each individual that has VACTERL, as will the severity of the anomalies.

While the majority of children with VACTERL Association have normal intelligence, they may have delayed growth and development in the early years.

***THIS IS NOT INTENDED TO SERVE AS MEDICAL ADVICE***