

The brachial plexus extends from the neck to the axilla and supplies the upper limb. It is formed from the ventral rami of C5, C6, C7, C8 and T1; branches from the ventral rami of C4 and T2 may also contribute. These five ventral rami emerge from between the anterior and middle scalene muscles.

The ventral rami of C5 and C6 unite to form the upper trunk, the ventral ramus of C7 continues as the middle trunk and the ventral rami of C8 and T1 unite to form the lower trunk. Behind the middle of the clavicle, each trunk divides into anterior and posterior divisions.

The anterior division of the lower trunk continues as the medial cord (C8 and T1, may receive a branch from the ventral ramus of C7), initially behind and then medial to the axillary artery; the three cords are named according to their relationship to the second part of the axillary artery as they pass into the axilla. Each cord divides into two main branches at the level of the third part of the axillary artery. The lateral cord divides into an ulnar nerve ((C7), C8, T1) and medial root of the median nerve (C8, T1); it also gives rise to the medial pectoral nerve (C8, T1), medial cutaneous nerve of the arm (C8, T1) and the medial cutaneous nerve of the forearm (C8, T1).