

The **superior vena cava** is formed by the union of the two brachiocephalic veins, at the level of the inferior border of the first right intercostal cartilage. During its vertical course in the superior mediastinum, the superior vena cava passes posterior to the first and second intercostal spaces. It pierces the fibrous pericardium at the level of the second costal cartilage and terminates posterior to the third right costal cartilage by draining into the right atrium of the heart. Laterally, on the left, is the brachiocephalic artery and ascending aorta.

The superior vena cava is valve-less in nature and drains blood from the superior half of the body. It receives blood from the brachiocephalic and azygos veins.