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The lungs are derived from an outpouching of the primitive foregut during the fourth week of intrauterine life. This bud becomes a two-lobed structure, the ends of which ultimately become the lungs. The lobar arrangement is defined early and is fairly constant but anomalies of fissures and segments leading to anatomical variation in the adult are common. The primitive lungs drain into the cardinal veins, which ultimately become the pulmonary veins draining into the left atrium. Variability in venous drainage is very common and is usually of little functional significance. At the most severe end of the spectrum is total anomalous drainage, which presents in early infant life because oxygenated blood is all directed back to the right heart.

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