

Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Pregnancy of unknown location

It has not been possible to confirm whether your pregnancy is going to continue or not and where the pregnancy is located. We refer to this situation as a “pregnancy of unknown location.”

There are 3 main reasons for not knowing exactly what is happening:

- it's simply too early to see the pregnancy.
- the pregnancy is not growing as it should - this may be why you started bleeding or experienced pain.
- there is a possibility of an ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the womb) - although this is rare, we cannot exclude it as a possibility, and it's too early to diagnose.

Blood tests

To help us find out what is happening, we need to check the pregnancy hormone levels in your blood. Two measurements are usually required, and these are done 48 hours apart.

The hormone we measure is called human Chorionic Gonadotrophin (hCG). The placental tissue produces this hormone. Your hCG level roughly doubles every 2 days in a normally growing early pregnancy.

Follow up.

We will take your contact number. A member of the Emergency Gynaecology Unit team will contact you with the results and the follow-up plan.



Patient Information

You may need an ultrasound scan after the 2 blood tests. If so, the nursing team will arrange this between 24 hours and 7 days later.

In certain cases, it may take several scans and more than 2 to 3 blood tests to reach a diagnosis. This is quite normal for diagnosing a pregnancy of unknown location. The nurses and doctors will keep you informed of the plan along the course of your investigations.

More advice

Bleeding can be very common. If it is not too heavy (for example, heavier than a period), you can stay at home.

If you develop any sharp pains or are aware of an increasing, possibly crampy discomfort, you may take paracetamol tablets.

If the pain is too bad or you are worried, please contact the Emergency Gynaecology Unit (EGU) on 024 7696 7000. The Unit operates 24 hours a day.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 7000 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

Did we get it right?

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