

## Obstetrics and Gynaecology

### Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (EPAU)

# What is a Pregnancy of Unknown Location?

Following your appointment today, it has not been possible to confirm whether your pregnancy is going to continue or not and where the pregnancy is located, we often refer to this situation as a “Pregnancy of Unknown Location”. We know that it can be difficult to take in all the facts when you are worried or upset, especially in a hospital environment.

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

- It is simply too early to see the pregnancy
- The pregnancy is not growing as it should, and that is possibly why you started bleeding or experienced pain.
- There is a possibility of an ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy outside the womb). Although this is rare, at this stage it cannot be excluded and it is 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 normally required and these are done 48 hours apart.

There are two hormones that are measured; one is called hCG (human Chorionic Gonadotrophin). The placental tissue produces this hormone and its level roughly doubles every two days in a normally growing early pregnancy.

The other is called Progesterone. This is a hormone that supports early pregnancy and is measured when your first sample is taken. Its level can



## Patient Information

help, in conjunction with the hCG level, in determining if the pregnancy is likely to be growing in the womb.

## Follow up

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

A further ultrasound scan may be required following the 2 blood tests, if so; it will be arranged by the nursing team between 24 hours and 7 days later depending on the levels of the hormones.

In certain cases it may take a number of scans and more than two to three blood tests to reach a diagnosis. This is quite normal for diagnosing this condition. The nurses/doctors will keep you informed of the plan along the course of your investigations.

## Further advice

Bleeding can be very common, and as long as it is not too heavy (for example heavier than a period) you can stay at home. However, 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 and/or you are worried please do not hesitate to contact the Emergency Gynaecology Unit (EGU) this operates 24 hours/day.

**Emergency Gynaecology Unit 024 7696 7000**

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.

### Document History

Department:	Gynaecology
Contact:	27000
Updated:	June 2020
Review:	June 2023
Version:	6.2
Reference:	HIC/LFT/350/07