Pregnancy of unknown location

You have been told that you have a pregnancy of unknown location. This leaflet explains what that is and what will happen next. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is pregnancy of unknown location
A pregnancy of unknown location is when you have a positive pregnancy test, but your pregnancy cannot be seen on a transvaginal (internal) ultrasound scan.

The following are possible reasons why the pregnancy cannot be seen on a scan:
- The pregnancy is in the womb, but it is too early to be seen on scan
- You have had a miscarriage
- The pregnancy is outside the womb (called an ectopic pregnancy) but it is too early to be seen on scan

Blood test and results
We have taken blood to check levels of the pregnancy hormone (BHCG) and progesterone. If you are well enough to be discharged home, one of the clinical specialist nurses will contact you with the results on the same day (usually after 5.30pm) or the following day if the blood test is done after 4pm. The results of these blood tests are reviewed daily with doctors specialising in early pregnancy problems.

The blood results will not be able to tell us where the pregnancy is, but will help us decide on what follow up you need.

Follow-up
- You may need to come in for a repeat blood test (for BHCG level), usually after two days.
- You may be given an appointment for another scan.
- You may be asked to do a home pregnancy test in 7 to 10 days (if the hormone levels are very low and the pregnancy is, sadly, likely to fail).

The Early Pregnancy and Acute Gynaecology Unit (EPAGU) clinical specialist nurse looking after you will aim to answer all the questions that you may have.

You can call the EPAGU, (details at the end of the leaflet), if you have any queries or need any advice after you have left the unit.

Even if you referred yourself, or came via the Emergency Department (A&E), we will write to your GP explaining what is happening, unless you ask us not to.
What to do if you are unwell
It is very important that you remain well.

You should return to the EPAGU (if open) or your nearest Emergency Department if you experience any of the following:

- Abdominal pain which is getting worse despite pain killers (paracetamol)
- Heavy bleeding with large clots
- Pain in your shoulder
- Feeling lightheaded, dizzy or faint.

Please call the EPAGU first so a clinical specialist nurse can check that it is safe for you to travel to us.

Useful sources of information

The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust
t: 01895 238025  w: www.ectopic.org.uk  e: ept@ectopic.org

Miscarriage Association
t: 01924 200795  w: www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk  e: info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Contact us

Early Pregnancy and Acute Gynaecology Unit (EPAGU), t: 020 7188 7206, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 6.30pm (weekends and Bank holidays 9.30am to 3.15, closed Christmas day).

Outside these hours please go to your nearest Emergency Department.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline
If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.
t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns
For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.
t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS)  e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)  e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services
If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.
t: 020 7188 8815  e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk