Pregnancy of Unknown Location (Inconclusive scan)

Obstetrics & Gynaecology
Women & Children’s Group

This leaflet has been designed to give you important information about your condition / procedure, and to answer some common queries that you may have.
Introduction
This leaflet has been designed to give you important information about pregnancy of unknown location and to answer some of the common queries you may have.

What does this mean?
This means that you have a positive pregnancy test but there is no sign of a definite pregnancy inside or outside of the womb (uterus) on the scan.

Possible causes for this scan appearance may be:

1. Early intrauterine pregnancy:
Pregnancy is inside the womb but it is too early to see on scan. It is a very common situation, particularly if you are unsure of your last menstrual period or have irregular periods. A repeat scan is often performed in around 10-14 days time.

2. Pregnancy is failing:
This is a common situation too and if you have had heavy bleeding it may well be that you have already passed pregnancy tissue and had a miscarriage. We will follow you up with a hormone test because pregnancy tests can stay positive for some time after a miscarriage.

3. Ectopic pregnancy:
A pregnancy is growing and developing outside of the womb. Ectopic pregnancies form around 1-2% of pregnancies in the UK and common sites may include the fallopian tubes.

4. Persistent pregnancy of unknown location:
Your pregnancy hormone levels stay within a similar range but the location of pregnancy still cannot be identified on scan. These only actually account for a very small number of pregnancies which cannot initially be identified on scan.

Why is pregnancy of unknown location important?
There are different outcomes for a pregnancy of unknown location.
Some of these pregnancies may disappear with or without symptoms whilst others may go on to progress as normal pregnancies. Sometimes the pregnancy of unknown location will persist and in other cases they will reveal themselves as ectopic pregnancies.

It is important to monitor patients for an ectopic pregnancy as these pregnancies do not develop as a normal pregnancy would. More importantly, ectopic pregnancies can leak and rupture, potentially leading to life threatening haemorrhage and in rare cases even death. It is therefore essential that you always attend for blood tests as advised by the medical staff and inform us of any worrying symptoms such as pain or vaginal bleeding.

What will happen next?
At the moment we cannot be sure which of these possibilities applies to you. Details of your symptoms can be discussed with a member of staff to help us decide what may be most likely. We will try and establish the risk of you having an ectopic pregnancy.
We will repeat a blood test called Beta HCG in 48 hours’ time.

We will monitor the pattern of your hormone level (blood test) to predict which possibility may be most likely.

We may wish to organise a repeat scan in 1-2 weeks time.

If we are concerned about a persistent pregnancy of unknown location or an ectopic pregnancy, you may well need medical treatment or an operation for it. An operation may be the preferred choice if you are very unwell. If you remain well, we may choose to monitor you very closely with blood tests or offer medical treatment with a drug called Methotrexate.

We may, less often, advise admission to the ward for assessment by a doctor if we feel your symptoms i.e. severe pain/dizziness warrant further investigation.

Where do I go?

You are likely to need to come into the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit or Gynaecology ward for repeat blood tests, often in 48 hours time, but we will arrange the date for you to come back in prior to you leaving. Bloods will be taken by a member of the nursing team or a doctor or you may be asked to attend the pathology lab. We will contact you directly later that day for the result and an agreed plan of action. Scans take place either on the ward or in the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit. There is no need to take time off work unless you are unwell, in which case you should inform us straight away. There is a table at the back of this booklet for you to record appointments and blood test results.

What do I need to be aware of?

You may have felt well when we saw you but ectopic pregnancies can make women very unwell, particularly if these pregnancies rupture and cause life threatening haemorrhage. Please call the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit or Gynaecology Ward if you have any new bleeding/heavy bleeding/severe abdominal pain/shoulder tip pain/dizziness, or any other concerns. We will either provide advice or ask you to come back into the hospital so that a doctor can assess you.

Alternatively, out of hours and particularly if you are unwell, you should attend the Accident and Emergency department who will then liaise with the Gynaecology team.

References


Help with this leaflet

Contact Ward B1: 01472 874111 ext. 7401

Who do I turn to?

We realize that this is likely to be a very worrying time. It isn’t at all uncommon to feel upset, tearful or even angry. If you, your partner or family need any more information or support then please contact the Early
Pregnancy Unit or Gynaecology Ward on the following numbers:

**Grimsby**  
Gynaecology Ward B1: **01472 875303**

**Scunthorpe**  
Early Pregnancy Unit: Opening hours are 8am - 4 pm Monday to Friday & 9 am-10 am Saturday.  
Tel: **01724 387753**  
Gynaecology Ward 19: Opening hours Monday to Friday 7am-8pm  
Tel: **01724 203438**  
Ward 28: Opening hours Friday 8pm-Monday 7am  
Tel: **01724 290108**

**National Support Groups**  
**Miscarriage association:**  
C/o Clayton Hospital,  
Northgate, Wakefield,  
West Yorkshire  
WF1 3JS  
Tel: 01924 200799  
(Monday-Friday 9am-4pm)

**Ectopic Support Group:**  
The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust,  
c/o 2nd floor,  
Golden Jubilee Wing,  
Kings College London,  
Denmark Hill,  
London  
SE5 9RS  
Tel: 020 77332653  
Email: ept@ectopic.org.uk

**Concerns and Queries**  
If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

**For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital**  
Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01472) 875403 or at the PALS office which is situated near the main entrance.

**For Scunthorpe General Hospital**  
Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01724) 290132 or at the PALS office which is situated on C Floor.  
Alternatively you can email: nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

**Confidentiality**  
Information on NHS patients is collected in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons (e.g. providing care and treatment, managing and planning the NHS, training and educating staff, research etc.).  
Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. Information will only ever be shared with people who have a genuine need for it (e.g. your GP or other professionals from whom you have been receiving care) or if the law requires it, for example, to notify a birth.  
Please be assured however that anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.
Moving & Handling
The Trust operates a Minimal Lifting Policy, which in essence means patients are only ever lifted by nursing staff in an emergency situation.

Patients are always encouraged to help themselves as much as possible when mobilising, and if unable to do so, equipment may be used to assist in their safe transfer.

If you have any questions regarding moving and handling of patients within the Trust, you may speak to any member of the nursing staff, the designated keyworker within the department or the Trust Moving & Handling Coordinator.

Zero Tolerance - Violent, Threatening and Abusive Behaviour
The Trust and its staff are committed to providing high quality care to patients within the department. However, we wish to advise all patients / visitors that the following inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Swearing
- Threatening / abusive behaviour
- Verbal / physical abuse

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw from treating patients whom are threatening / abusive / violent and ensuring the removal of those persons from the premises.

All acts of criminal violence and aggression will be notified to the Police immediately.

Risk Management Strategy
The Trust welcomes comments and suggestions from patients and visitors that could help to reduce risk.

Perhaps you have experienced something whilst in hospital, whilst attending as an outpatient or as a visitor and you felt at risk.

Please tell a member of staff on the ward or in the department you are attending / visiting.

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Diana Princess of Wales Hospital
Scarthe Road
Grimsby
01472 874111

Scunthorpe General Hospital
Cliff Gardens
Scunthorpe
01724 282282

Goole & District Hospital
Woodland Avenue
Goole
01405 720720

www.nlghft.nhs.uk

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The table below is for you to write in any appointments and results:

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