

Information for women with an inconclusive early pregnancy scan result

Introduction

Following your ultrasound scan and consultation with the doctor(s) at the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (EPAU) or on the Women's Health ward, it remains unclear whether your pregnancy is going to continue or not. We know that it can be difficult to take in all the facts when you are worried or upset. This leaflet aims to provide some information and advice regarding your situation.

What is a β -hCG blood test?

There are three main reasons for you not being told exactly what is happening:

- It is simply too early to see the pregnancy on ultrasound scan, or
- the pregnancy is not growing as it should, and may turn out to be a miscarriage, or
- there is a possibility of an ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy outside the womb). Although at this stage this is rare, it cannot be entirely excluded and it is too early to be certain.

In order to clarify the situation, we would like to measure the levels of the pregnancy hormone, β -hCG (beta-human chorionic gonadotrophin) in your blood. This blood test will help to distinguish different types of pregnancy.

How will I get the results of the blood test?

You will be contacted by telephone when the result of the blood test is available, usually around 6pm on the evening of the blood test. A plan of care will be given to you over the phone by the doctor following the results of the blood test. Do not hesitate to ask any questions if you are unsure of what you have been told. You must follow the instructions that you are given.

Most women will be asked to attend the phlebotomy (blood tests) department two days later for a second blood test. You do not need to attend the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit on that day, unless you are unwell or have further queries.

You may go home and the results will be telephoned to you after 6.00pm by the doctor on-call, as before. Some women will be asked to attend the Women's Health ward for further assessment as an emergency, depending on the levels of the β -hCG hormone in the blood.

What do I do after the blood test is done on each occasion?

It is very important that you understand and follow the instructions given to you by the EPAU staff. You should rest and avoid any strenuous exercises or lifting. You must be contactable and within easy reach of the hospital.

As there is the possibility that this is an ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy that is situated outside the womb, most often in the fallopian tube, which can be dangerous), you should watch out for the following symptoms:

- severe abdominal pain
- heavy vaginal bleeding
- shoulder tip pain
- dizziness or fainting

- generally feeling unwell

If any of these symptoms occur please contact Conquest Hospital on (01424) 755255 ext: 7047 for advice. You may be asked to attend the ward for further assessment or admission.

You must come into hospital immediately if you faint or pass out.

What do I do if the hospital does not contact me?

If you have not heard from the hospital by 6:30pm on the day of your blood test, you should telephone Mirrlees Ward at Conquest Hospital on (01424) 755255 ext: 7047.

Explain to the staff that you are waiting for your pregnancy hormone blood test result and no one has yet contacted you. The staff will get the on-call doctor or nurse to phone you later with the results.

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: (01323) 417400 Ext: 5860 or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

The Trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 01424 755255 Ext: 2620

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
David Chui and Dexter Pascall Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Guideline Implementation Group

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