

Patient Information

Bleeding & Abdominal Pain in Early Pregnancy

Vaginal bleeding during early pregnancy can sometimes be normal. Abnormal bleeding in pregnancy can have many causes, the most common of which is 'miscarriage'. Statistics show that as many as 1 in 5 pregnancies can end in miscarriage. The cause in most cases is not known. Some of these go unnoticed and appear as a late period.

Another major cause of bleeding is ectopic pregnancy. In this instance, the pregnancy occurs outside of the uterus (womb), usually in one of the fallopian tubes. This may also be called a 'tubal pregnancy'. In this type of pregnancy, the growing fetus puts pressure on the tube causing pain in the pelvic area or vaginal bleeding. If this condition is left untreated, the tube can rupture.

In the Emergency Department, you will be asked certain questions about your menstrual cycle and past pregnancies. We do need to ask personal questions in order to decide on the best possible treatment for you.

A nurse will check your observations (blood pressure, pulse, respiratory rate and temperature).

Blood tests will be taken which may include one test to check your blood count and identify your blood type. A pregnancy test and urine sample may also be requested.

The doctor or nurse practitioner will take your medical history and may conduct a brief physical examination. You could be referred to see the gynaecology doctor if further tests or examination are required. A pelvic (internal) examination may be required, this examination may be slightly uncomfortable or embarrassing to some women, but the majority do not find it painful. The **pelvic examination will not harm** your pregnancy or cause a miscarriage.

After the examinations there may be a delay of at least one hour whilst you wait for the results of your blood and urine tests.

Further treatment will depend on what is found on your examination and blood tests. If the bleeding is not severe and there is no sign of immediate miscarriage, you may be able to return home. In some cases an ultrasound of the pelvis may be necessary in the near future.

We understand that you and your family will be very anxious at this time. Please feel free to talk to us regarding your concerns and ask any questions you may have.

Emergency Department
Wythenshawe Hospital

Feb 2006
Review Feb 2008