

Pregnancy of Unknown Location

What is a pregnancy of unknown location?

You have had an ultrasound scan today to check if your pregnancy is developing normally.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to see a pregnancy on ultrasound. This can occur in up to a third of pregnancy scans. There are three possible reasons for this.

- 1 **A very small, normal pregnancy in the uterus (womb).** The pregnancy may be normal, but too small to be seen on scan. This usually happens in women who are unsure of their dates, or have long menstrual cycles and the scan was done too early.
- 2 **A miscarriage.** The pregnancy may have already been lost and passed out with bleeding and therefore cannot be seen on the scan. In such cases, pregnancy tests may remain positive for a couple of weeks after the miscarriage.
- 3 **An ectopic pregnancy.** The pregnancy may be developing outside the uterus. The most common site for an ectopic pregnancy to grow is in the Fallopian tubes and this may be difficult to see on a scan. An ectopic pregnancy can be a serious condition because it may cause internal bleeding, so we need to monitor women in this situation very carefully.

If you are found to have a pregnancy of unknown location, a blood test will be done.

What is the blood test for?

The blood test is done to measure the amount of pregnancy hormone in the blood.

We will need to repeat the blood test in 48 hours as it is the rise or fall in the hormone level which is important, not the level itself. This result may tell us which of the above outcomes is the most likely in your case.

What happens next?

The Early Pregnancy and Emergency Gynaecology Unit team will follow up your blood test and call you with the result. You may need another blood test or ultrasound scan based on the first blood test result. We will continue to monitor you until we can confirm the outcome of your pregnancy, which may take up to two weeks. We will discuss each result with you in detail and try to keep you as informed as possible during this time.

What should I do if I get pain or bleeding?

You may have felt well when we first saw you but **if you develop any sudden abdominal pain, pain in the tips of your shoulders or vaginal bleeding, you should call us to arrange a review as this may indicate an ectopic pregnancy.** Until we can confirm the outcome of your pregnancy, you are advised not to travel outside the UK.

How to contact us

The Peggy Cole Emergency Gynaecology Assessment Unit (EGAU) at Ipswich Hospital is open Monday to Friday, 8am–4pm (excluding bank holidays).

Telephone **01473 703671** or **703286** or, outside the above hours, call the Stour Centre on **01473 704788**.