

The Early Pregnancy Unit at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital

Welcome to the Early Pregnancy Unit. This leaflet will explain what to expect when you arrive. We understand that you may be anxious and our staff will do all they can to help you. Many early pregnancy problems are complicated and require considerable time to manage properly, including waiting for test results. We are sorry if there is delay in looking after you and will always try to keep you informed.

What is EPU?

The Early Pregnancy Unit is a clinic held for women who are experiencing pain and / or bleeding in early (6-12 weeks) pregnancy, or who have had previous pregnancy problems. It is staffed by Specialist Nurses with expert skill in caring for women in early pregnancy with support from a consultant lead clinician.

What will happen when I attend the clinic?

Once we have called you into the clinic room you will be asked some questions regarding your pregnancy. In particular we need to know:

- The date your last period started
- The symptoms you are experiencing
- Previous pregnancy details

We will then take you into our examination room where we can perform an ultrasound scan. We often try to visualise your womb with an abdominal (tummy) scan but it may be necessary to do a transvaginal (internal) scan, as this is recognised as being the best way to look at your pregnancy at early stages. You may also need

blood tests to help explain your symptoms.

Is having an internal scan safe in early pregnancy?

Yes. The specially designed ultrasound probe is covered in a rubber sheath and placed just inside your vagina (front passage).

Having an internal scan in early pregnancy is safe and will not affect the outcome of your pregnancy. This type of scan is not painful and does not cause bleeding or infection.

What will the scan tell me?

Hopefully that your pregnancy is developing normally. However please remember it may not always be good news. Approximately 1 in 5 pregnancies end in a miscarriage.

What if the scan can't see a pregnancy?

More tests may be needed including a urine pregnancy test or blood test for pregnancy hormone level. The scan may need to be repeated depending on your blood test results or your symptoms.

Do I need any preparation for the scan?

If possible, you should have a fairly full bladder. We understand this may be uncomfortable if you are waiting, but it may allow you to avoid a vaginal scan. Please remember if you empty your

bladder to make sure you do a specimen if you have not brought one with you, as we will need this in the clinic. If you need a pot please ask at the reception.

Can I bring someone into the clinic room with me?

Yes we would encourage your partner or someone close to come with you. However you may not want to bring children into the room with you, in case it is not good news.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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