

Pregnancy of Unknown Location (PUL) Information Leaflet

Introduction

Following an ultrasound scan you have been diagnosed with a condition called 'pregnancy of unknown location'. During the scan it has been identified that your womb is empty despite a positive urine pregnancy test. PUL can be a confusing diagnosis so we hope this leaflet helps to try and explain what it means and what could happen next.

A Pregnancy of Unknown Location Could Mean One of the Following Three Possibilities

- An early intrauterine pregnancy. The pregnancy could be in the right place but is too small to be seen on scan. Pregnancy tests are now very sensitive and can detect pregnancy hormones even just a few days after conception. This can give an unclear picture especially if you are unsure of the date of your last period or have irregular periods.
- An early miscarriage has occurred or the pregnancy is failing sometimes if you have had vaginal bleeding it is possible that the pregnancy has passed and this is why it is no longer visible on scan.
- The pregnancy is located somewhere other than the womb. This is called an 'ectopic pregnancy' which would need to be investigated further as it is potentially life threatening if not treated in the early stages.

What Happens Next?

At the moment we cannot be sure which of the above three possibilities applies to you. To help us find out what is happening with your pregnancy we will need to look at the level of pregnancy hormone (HCG) in your blood and how much this increases / decreases over a 48 hour period. You will be able to go home and arrangements will be made for you to attend for the second blood test.

- Early intrauterine pregnancy – HCG levels in this case would rise significantly. This would suggest the pregnancy is in the right place but it is too early to be seen on scan. Should this be the case a repeat scan would be arranged in 10 – 14 days' time.
- An early miscarriage – HCG levels would drop significantly. Information on miscarriage will be provided and you will be asked to perform a home pregnancy test in 2 – 3 weeks to ensure hormone levels have returned to pre-pregnancy levels.
- An ectopic pregnancy – the HCG level may increase, but not significantly or stay the same. Even if this happens we still cannot confirm an ectopic pregnancy until further investigations have been made. If you are suspected of having an ectopic pregnancy you will be reviewed by a senior doctor and may have to be admitted to the hospital for observation if you are unwell.

Further Advice

For each of the potential outcomes we would ask you to watch out for any of the following symptoms:

- Bleeding
- Pain / change in nature of pain
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Feeling unwell
- Collapse or fainting episode
- Shoulder pain.

Please contact the Gynaecology Emergency Department on 0151 702 4140 if you develop any of the above and you will speak with one of our nurses who can offer advice.

Alternatively you are welcome to attend the department for assessment at any time. We understand this can be a very confusing and upsetting time, therefore we would like to reassure you that our department is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week where trained staffs are available to help you.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

This leaflet can be made available in difference formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk