

Information about your early pregnancy (unable to confirm heartbeat)

Bleeding or spotting in pregnancy is common, especially during the first 12 weeks and doesn't necessarily mean that you are miscarrying or that you will miscarry. One study of women attending an Early Pregnancy Unit because of bleeding in pregnancy showed that about half of them had continuing pregnancies. So if you have bleeding or spotting, you will still hopefully still go on to have a healthy pregnancy.

Emergency early scans

You may have been referred for an early scan because of vaginal bleeding or pain, or possibly because you have had problems in a previous pregnancy. **The best time to scan is from about 7 weeks' gestation when it should be possible to see the baby's heartbeat.**

What does a scan show?

The ultrasound scan may show:

- **A live normally sited pregnancy** where the pregnancy is seen in the correct position within the uterus (womb) with a visible heartbeat.
- **A normally sited early pregnancy** where the pregnancy is seen in the correct position your uterus (not ectopic), but there is no visible heartbeat detected.

Why would there be no heartbeat on my baby today?

If we did not find your baby's heartbeat today it could be that you conceived late in your cycle so everything is fine, but you are less weeks pregnant than you thought. If this is the case, we will pick up your baby's heartbeat at your next scan. Unfortunately there is a possibility that your pregnancy is not be developing normally.

I just want to know what is happening?

Sadly it is not always not possible to tell you quickly what is happening. We may need to give your body time for the pregnancy to grow, then rescan again when things should be clearer. This allows us to compare sizes and find the heartbeat when your baby is bigger. Sometimes, it can take several scans before you may know for sure what is going on, and some women describe it like being 'in limbo'.

What do I do at home?

Going home without knowing whether your pregnancy is continuing can be very difficult. You are likely to feel very anxious and distressed and will need good support from a friend, partner or family. If you haven't told anyone about your pregnancy this may be a good time to confide in someone close who can support you and come back to hospital with you if that is what you would like. Some women continue to work because they like the distraction, others need a few days at home. This will probably depend on how much bleeding or pain you have. There are no special things you need to do at home. Try to carry on your normal activities as much as you can.

Do I need to come to hospital if I have more bleeding or pain?

You will usually be more comfortable at home until your next scan. You can take paracetamol for pain, but no more than 8 tablets in a 24 hour period. Change your

pads like you would with a period, but call us if it is very heavy or you feel unwell with the bleeding. We would suggest that if you need 2 thick sanitary pads per hour for 2 hours then you should have an assessment in hospital. Unfortunately we cannot stop bleeding or a miscarriage from happening but it is important to keep you safe and as comfortable as possible until your next appointment. Call the triage line if unsure.

If I bleed heavily do I need to come for my next scan date?

Some women do bleed more heavily between scans but we still suggest that you come for your appointment. Some women bleed and still have an ongoing pregnancy. Some women bleed and unfortunately they have miscarried. It is important that we find out what is happening for you and review your symptoms to make sure you are well.

How will I know if I have miscarried?

Some women describe only light bleeding but some describe heavy bleeding for a couple of hours with some clots. Some women describe period pain whilst others describe labour type contractions.

Some women describe seeing a sac or tissue in the bleeding that they pass. If this happens to you and you are unsure what to do, please talk to us. We are happy for you to bring the tissue to us, and we can care for it under our hospital guidelines.

Could I have a scan earlier to give me a quicker answer?

We need to give the pregnancy time to develop and repeating a scan too early wouldn't tell us if the pregnancy is growing normally.

Contact Details:

<p>The Early Pregnancy Unit (EPU) Lily clinic, treatment Centre Hinchingbrooke Hospital Huntingdon, PE29 6NT Opening hours may vary</p>	<p>The Emergency Gynaecology Assessment Unit (EGAU) 1st floor, woman and child unit, Bretton Gate Peterborough (City Hospital) PE3 9GZ Open: Weekdays 0800-1800-phone line open until 1730 Weekends/Bank holidays 0800-1200</p>
<p>Central triage line for EPU and EGAU: 01733 673758 (voicemail will cut in when the line is engaged – please leave a message for a call back) www.womenshealthpeterborough.co.uk</p>	
<p>For emergencies only, out of these hours, please attend the Emergency Department</p>	

Within this leaflet we use the term woman/women, however we acknowledge that it is not only people who identify as women for whom it is necessary to access our services. We recognise the importance of providing inclusive and respectful care to all people and their families, including those whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to make you feel more comfortable while you are under our care.