Bleeding in early pregnancy

Following your assessment in the emergency department today, you have been given the next available appointment in the Early Pregnancy Unit (EPU).

The EPU is on D Level, Princess Anne Hospital, Coxford Road.

Your appointment is on: ........................................ at: ........................................

• if you are less than ten weeks pregnant you should attend your appointment with an empty bladder if possible
• if you are over ten weeks pregnant you should attend your appointment with a full bladder if possible

Please bring any pregnancy booking records with you.

About bleeding during pregnancy

Bleeding during pregnancy can be a very worrying time. Light vaginal bleeding is common during the first trimester of pregnancy (the first 12 weeks), so having this symptom does not necessarily mean that you are having a miscarriage. A miscarriage is the loss of a pregnancy that happens sometime during the first 23 weeks.

Around three quarters of miscarriages happen during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. The main symptom of a miscarriage is vaginal bleeding, which may be followed by cramping and pain in your lower abdomen.

Among women who know they are pregnant, it is estimated that 25% of these pregnancies will end in miscarriage. This is around one in four pregnancies. Many more miscarriages occur before a woman is even aware that she has become pregnant.

On rare occasions, a fertilised egg implants itself outside of the womb, usually in one of the fallopian tubes. This is called an ectopic pregnancy. Ectopic pregnancies are potentially serious because there is a risk that you could experience internal bleeding. Symptoms of an ectopic pregnancy usually appear between weeks five to ten of the pregnancy. An ectopic pregnancy may present itself as abdominal pain with or without vaginal bleeding.

You can take paracetamol for any discomfort and we advise that you use sanitary towels rather than tampons for any bleeding that you may have.
Further symptoms or concerns
If, after leaving the emergency department you experience any of the following:

- heavy bleeding (significantly more than a period)
- passing of clots of blood
- abdominal pain which is not relieved by simple analgesia like paracetamol or codeine

we advise you to contact the EPU or Bramshaw Women’s Unit on the numbers below or return to the emergency department for reassessment, rather than waiting for your appointment.

Contact details

Early pregnancy unit (9am to 7pm, Monday to Friday)
Telephone: 023 8120 8412

Bramshaw Women’s Unit (out of hours, weekends and bank holidays)
Telephone: 023 8120 6035