



A guide to...

Information following a scan when it is unsure whether the pregnancy is ongoing

Patient information

How to contact us

Gynaecology Department
Watford General Hospital
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Vicarage Road
Watford
Hertfordshire WD18 0HB

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



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Information for women who have had a scan and we can't be sure whether the pregnancy is ongoing

We are sorry that we have been unable to reassure you today. We hope that this information is of some help at this difficult time.

What does this mean?

Today's ultrasound scan has shown that you are pregnant, but we can't be sure whether this pregnancy is going to miscarry or continue.

Why can't the scan be sure?

Ultrasound scans are very helpful, but sometimes one scan on its own cannot give a definite answer and we need to do another scan in 7-10 days to compare it. It may be that the dates of your last period are not accurate, and the pregnancy is not as far on as we first thought, or it may be that the dates are accurate and the pregnancy started off, but then stopped growing.

What do I do now?

You don't need to do anything different for now. We will see you again in one to two weeks to do another scan, and then we will be able to tell whether the pregnancy is developing or not.

What happens if I start bleeding more heavily?

If the pregnancy is not growing, you may start to bleed more heavily before we next see you. This means you may be starting to have the miscarriage.

What will the bleeding be like?

Some women describe episodes of bleeding before the actual miscarriage happens. This can be very confusing, as you may not know if the miscarriage has happened or not. The amount of bleeding is dependent on how advanced the pregnancy is. Some women experience a great deal of bleeding with lumps (clots) of blood coming away. It is a lot heavier than a period and can be frightening.

Will it hurt?

The uterus needs to contract to miscarry the pregnancy and some women describe this as labour pains. You can take your normal painkillers you have at home. If you need further painkillers, you can come into hospital.

Will I see anything?

It is possible that you may see the pregnancy sac, which can be "jelly-like" in appearance. It is up to you what you do with this, however many women miscarry into the toilet.

How long will the bleeding last?

After a miscarriage, the bleeding can go on for one to two weeks. It should get lighter like the end of a period. You should just use sanitary pads, not tampons. If the bleeding becomes heavy or if you have an unpleasant smelling discharge, you should contact GDAU, as you may need antibiotics for an infection.

How will I know if the miscarriage has happened?

We will see you as arranged in 7-10 days. At this time, you may or may not need another scan depending upon what has happened since we last saw you. Please keep this appointment as we would like to see how you are, however if you don't attend, we will ring you. Please make sure we have the number you prefer us to use.

When should I seek help?

If you feel faint or dizzy with the bleeding or have severe pain, you should telephone the unit on the number given at the end of this leaflet and seek medical attention to the nearest A&E department. If the matter is not urgent and you would like some advice you can telephone the Early Pregnancy Unit within normal working hours or leave a message on the answer phone. The staff in the Early Pregnancy Unit or the Emergency Gynae Clinic will be happy to speak to you.

If the pregnancy has not grown and I don't have a miscarriage before I come back, what then?

If the follow up scan shows that the pregnancy is not continuing, we will discuss the different ways to manage the problem. This involves either:

- Expectant management – doing nothing and allowing nature to take its course. (It is likely that you will miscarry over the next few weeks).
- Medical management – taking tablets to start the miscarriage process.
- Surgical management – having a small operation to empty the uterus (womb).

If you have non-urgent questions, please contact the Early Pregnancy Unit at Watford General Hospital on 01923-217831

If you require urgent assistance, please contact the Gynaecology Day Assessment Unit (GDAU) at Watford General Hospital on 01923-217344

Other sources of help

The Miscarriage Association Tel 01924-200799

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk