

## References

Ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage: diagnosis and initial management NICE guideline 2019

## Contact details

### Bournemouth Early Pregnancy Unit

Monday - Friday, 8am-3.30pm

Tel: **0300 019 5713**

### Poole Early Pregnancy Unit

Monday - Friday, 8.30am-4pm

Tel: **0300 019 2236**

**Out of hours urgent care: 111**

## Counselling support

There is a counselling service and the SPRING support charity which offers support through any loss in pregnancy. You can contact them directly.

### Counselling service:

Call **0300 019 8752**

or email [maternity.counsellors@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:maternity.counsellors@uhd.nhs.uk)

### SPRING support charity:

Call **0300 019 8084** or email [www.springsupport.org.uk](http://www.springsupport.org.uk)

### The Miscarriage Association:

[www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

## Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit

# Beta HCG (BHCG) monitoring




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This leaflet aims to give some information and advice about the purpose of serial BHCG monitoring. Your ultrasound scan today has not given a clear answer as to what is happening with your pregnancy. At the moment we are considering three possibilities:

- that you have a very early pregnancy
- that you have already had a miscarriage
- that you have a possible ectopic pregnancy or pregnancy of unknown location

## What is BHCG?

Beta-HCG is a hormone produced in large quantities during early pregnancy. Its full name is human chorionic gonadotrophin. It can be detected in the mother's blood or urine.

## How is BHCG tested?

The test is performed by taking a sample of blood and measuring the level of BHCG in it. The test may be repeated several times to monitor whether the hormone level rises or falls. A single test may not give a diagnosis and a repeat test is usually required to compare the result.

## Why do I need to have this blood test?

Measurement of blood HCG level is more accurate than a urine test and will help aid our diagnosis. There is a large variation in BHCG level for any given time in pregnancy.

## Possible outcomes

- If the BHCG in your blood rises quickly, then this may signify a continuing pregnancy. Once a certain level is reached, you will have another scan to assess how the pregnancy is progressing.
- If the BHCG is low or goes down quickly, then unfortunately, it is likely that you have suffered a miscarriage. This will be explained to you and further information given.
- If the BHCG does not fall or the level is high and your scan shows an empty womb, then there is a possibility of an ectopic pregnancy and further investigations are required.

## What is an ectopic pregnancy?

An ectopic pregnancy is when a pregnancy starts to grow outside the womb. In the UK, one in 90 (just over 1%) pregnancies is an ectopic pregnancy (RCOG). This may cause internal bleeding and appropriate management is essential.

## What symptoms should I look out for?

If you feel unwell in any way or experience any change in your condition, you must get in touch with the Early Pregnancy Unit or seek urgent medical advice. You should look out for:

- increasing abdominal pain
- increased bleeding
- feelings of dizziness, light headedness or pains in the tip of the shoulder

## Miscarriage

Your ultrasound scan may indicate a complete miscarriage, but your urine pregnancy test may remain positive as the pregnancy hormones are still present in your system. If this should happen, we will monitor your BHCG until we can confirm that diagnosis.

## Our aim

Our aim is to support you through this uncertain time and we will ensure you are kept fully informed of your planned management of care.

## For results: please telephone

Date of blood test	When result will be available