

# Early intrauterine pregnancy

## Information for patients

This leaflet answers some of the questions you may have about early intrauterine pregnancy. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the doctors or nurses caring for you.

[www.kch.nhs.uk](http://www.kch.nhs.uk)

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### **What is an early intrauterine pregnancy?**

When the doctor or specialist nurse scanned you today, they diagnosed you with early intrauterine pregnancy. You may or may not have expected your pregnancy to be at an early stage. This diagnosis means that there is a pregnancy sac in the womb, but it is too small to see the baby or its heartbeat.

### **What does this mean?**

Your pregnancy may appear to be at an earlier stage than expected for one of two reasons:

- You are simply in the early stages of pregnancy and we just need to give the pregnancy more time to grow, as it is too early to see the embryo (a small baby) and heartbeat. This is more likely if you are unsure of your dates, have irregular periods or have recently stopped taking the contraceptive pill.
- Your pregnancy is not progressing normally. This is more likely if you are very sure of your dates and they do not seem to match the size of your pregnancy, if you have vaginal bleeding or if your progesterone level is low.

### **What happens next?**

If your dates do not match what we have seen on your scan or you have had vaginal bleeding, we usually ask you to come in for another scan one – two weeks later depending on the size of the pregnancy sac or embryo. This gives your pregnancy time to develop before we scan you

again. After this scan we should be able to date your pregnancy and tell you if it is progressing as we would expect.

### **What if I have bleeding?**

Many women have vaginal bleeding in pregnancy. This does not mean that your pregnancy is not going to progress normally, but it does increase your risk of a miscarriage.

If your pregnancy looked earlier than we expected on your scan then there is a chance that your pregnancy is not progressing normally.

If so, you may start to bleed and miscarry before we see you again.

### **How do I know if I am having a miscarriage?**

You will have bleeding, possibly heavy and with clots, as well as cramps or contraction-like pains.

### **What should I do if I am miscarrying?**

If the bleeding is too heavy to bear with clots and cramps, please go to your local Emergency Department (ED) or contact us on the numbers on page three, as you may need to have surgery to settle the bleeding. Unfortunately, there is nothing that can be done and no medicine that can stop a miscarriage.

You can take painkillers such as ibuprofen and/or paracetamol, to ease any pain and let the miscarriage happen naturally. You can still come for your check scan as planned. We will confirm that you have had a miscarriage and you can ask us any questions that you may have.

### **Who can I contact with queries and concerns?**

If you have any queries or concerns during normal working hours, contact the Early Pregnancy Unit:

#### **King's College Hospital site**

Tel **020 3299 3168** – 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday

#### **Princess Royal University Hospital site**

Tel **01689 865721** – 9am- 4pm, Monday to Friday

If you have any urgent queries outside of these hours, contact the gynaecology ward:

#### **King's College Hospital site**

Tel **020 3299 5934**

#### **Princess Royal University Hospital site**

Tel **01689 864132**

In an emergency, please go to your local Emergency Department (ED).

## **More information**

These websites have more information about ultrasound scans and the signs and symptoms of early pregnancy.

### **The Miscarriage Association**

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

### **The Association of Early Pregnancy Units**

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

## **Sharing your information**

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

## **Care provided by students**

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you.

### **PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS**

Tel: **020 3299 3601** Email [kch-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.pals@nhs.net)

You can also contact us by using our online form at [www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals](http://www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals)

### **PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND**

Tel: **01689 863252** Email: [kch-tr.palskent@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palskent@nhs.net)

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on **020 3299 1844**.