

# Unexpected findings at your dating scan

You have been given this information because your routine dating ultrasound scan has not shown us what we expected to see.

We know that this can be a confusing and upsetting experience, and it can be hard to take it all in. It can be even more difficult to accept that there may be a problem if you have not had any symptoms such as pain and bleeding.

This leaflet will give you more information about what your scan has shown and explain the next steps in your treatment.

## **If your scan has shown a pregnancy which is smaller than we expected or does not yet have a heartbeat.**

It may be that your pregnancy is earlier than we expected from the date of your last period. This can happen if you got pregnant while you were taking contraception or breastfeeding, or if your periods are irregular.

Sometimes this can be a sign that the pregnancy has stopped developing at an early stage (a missed or silent miscarriage). It is not always possible to confirm that this is the case on a single scan. You will be offered another scan in 7-10 days to check whether the pregnancy has grown. This will be done in the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit.

## **If your scan has shown that your womb is empty even though you have had a positive pregnancy test.**

It may be that your pregnancy is very early (less than 6 weeks) or that it has stopped developing at an early stage (an early miscarriage). Less commonly, this can be a sign that the pregnancy has started to develop outside of your womb (an ectopic pregnancy). This can be dangerous.

You will be offered additional blood tests and a medical review on the gynaecology ward. These will help us to understand what is happening and how we can keep you safe. You do not usually need to be admitted to hospital. Your results will be explained to you. You may need follow-up blood tests or scans. You will be given information about how to contact the ward if you have concerning symptoms.

## **If your scan has shown a miscarriage**

This can be very distressing news to receive and you may not feel able to process it straightaway. You will have the opportunity to discuss the findings of the scan with a doctor or specialist nurse on the day of your scan.

You do not need have to have a repeat scan but may feel that you prefer to have one. This can be arranged from the clinic.

If you feel that you need more time to come to terms with the situation, review on the gynaecology ward can be arranged for another day or you can choose to discuss your options over the telephone.

You will be offered information about options for treatment. Taking time to think about your choices is not harmful or dangerous.

### **Support and Information**

You may find information and support online at the Miscarriage Association website <https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk>. There is information about options for treatment of miscarriage, understanding the tests and scans and looking after your mental health. There is also a helpline for support.

Our EPAU team of specialist gynaecology nurses are available for advice on 02920742727

Ratified at Gynae Professional Forum 24/9/21. Written by Monique Latibeaudiere.