



Early Pregnancy Assessment Units (EPAUs)

Information for women, birthing people, and their families

We are sorry that you are having concerns in the early stages of your pregnancy.

Our Early Pregnancy Assessment Units (EPAUs) see women and birthing people with pregnancy concerns, or who have previously had early pregnancy problems, and are between six to 16 weeks pregnant.

How am I referred to the EPAU?

There are a number of ways you can be referred to the EPAU.

- If you have been seen in the Emergency Department with any concerns about your pregnancy, you should be referred to EPAU for a follow-up blood test and / or scan. If you have been referred to EPAU for a routine scan, your details will be passed to EPAU by the Emergency Department for them to contact you the next working day.
- You can also be referred from your GP surgery.
- Should you have any urgent concerns you can call ahead to your closest unit for advice and to make your own appointment.

If you have any urgent concerns, where you are becoming unwell with any heavy vaginal bleeding and / or uncontrolled pain, please go to your nearest Emergency Department immediately. Please do not wait for your appointment at the EPAU, if you have one.

Why has this appointment been recommended?

You have been referred to the EPAU as you meet the following criteria.

- You are having pain and / or vaginal bleeding with a positive pregnancy test.
- You have had two or more consecutive (back to back) miscarriages, a previous ectopic pregnancy, or previous molar pregnancy.

What will happen when I arrive at the EPAU?

- You will be greeted at the EPAU reception and asked to wait until a nurse is free to see you.
- One of the specialist nurses will spend time with you. They will take a history of your pregnancy and any previous pregnancies.
- You may have a blood test taken to measure the pregnancy hormone level in your blood. This can be used at future appointments, if needed, to monitor the progress of your pregnancy.
- You may also have an ultrasound scan. The best images are available in early pregnancy from an internal (vaginal) scan.

Who will perform the ultrasound scan?

The ultrasound scans are usually performed by a qualified scanner called a sonographer. This may be a male member of staff. If you want, you can have somebody with you for support. Following this scan you will return to the clinic to see the nurse.

When and how will I receive my results?

The clinics are run by nurses, so after your scan you will return to the clinic and the nurse will discuss your scan and blood results with you. They may also ask a doctor to examine you if necessary.

Will I need a follow-up appointment?

After the nurse has explained your results to you, they will arrange with you a plan for your future care, including any follow-up appointments.

What should I do if I feel unwell at home?

Should you have any urgent concerns about your pregnancy, please call your closest EPAU. Our EPAU clinics can be found at:

- Birchington Ward, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234469
- Women's Health Suite, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 651987

Any urgent concerns where you are becoming unwell with any heavy vaginal bleeding and / or uncontrolled pain, please go to your nearest Emergency Department immediately. Please do not wait for your appointment, if you have one.

Further information

Useful information can be found on the following web sites.

- Miscarriage Association (<https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/>)

- The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust (<https://ectopic.org.uk/>)
- NHS: miscarriage (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/miscarriage/>)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145 (tel://+441227783145), or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals website (<https://www.ekhft.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/patient-information/>).

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