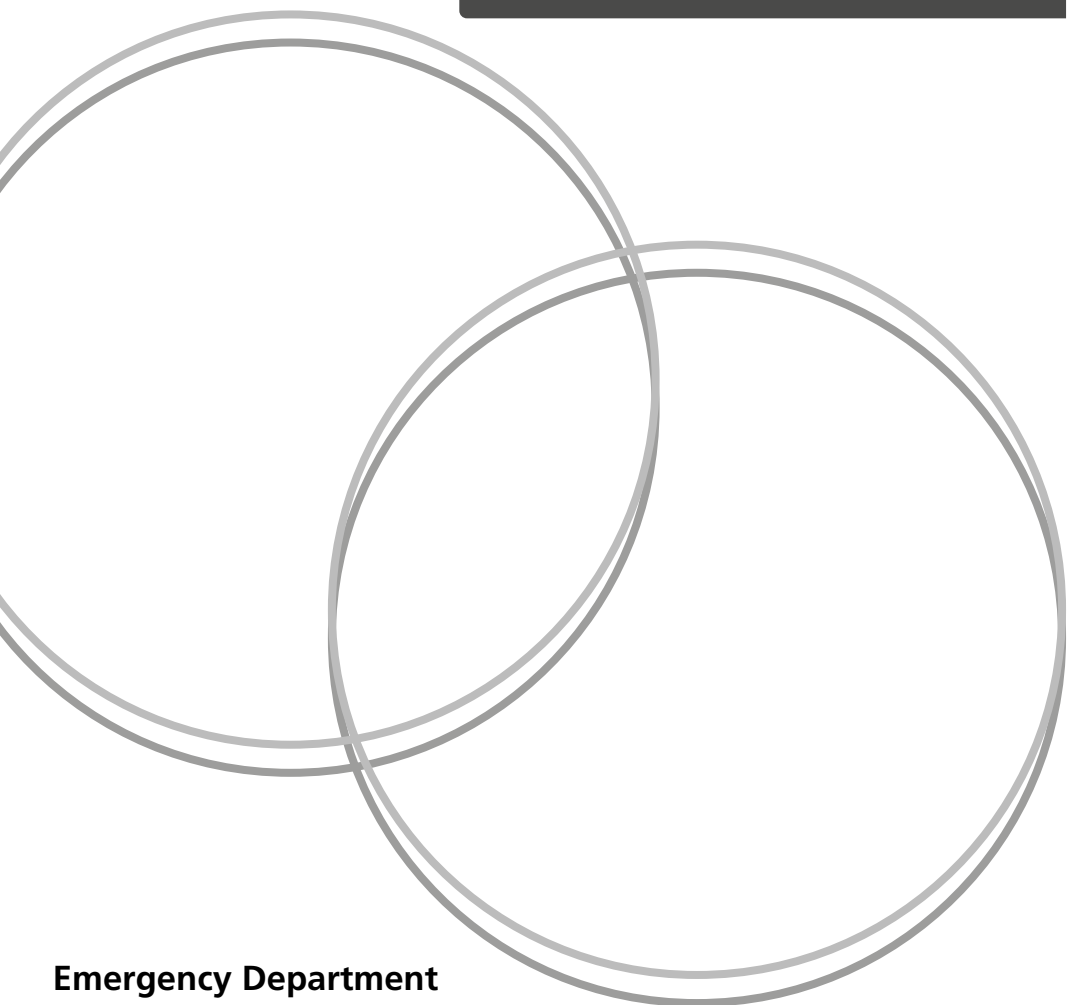




Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (EPAU)

**Information for women  
experiencing problems in the  
first 16 weeks of pregnancy**



**Emergency Department**

We have given you this information because you have come to the Emergency Department experiencing a problem in your early pregnancy, such as bleeding or abdominal cramps (similar to period pains).

We have assessed you while you have been in the Emergency Department and have advised you to contact the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (EPAU). You may be booked for a clinic appointment, at this clinic appointment you will be re-assessed, have some tests and talk with a Specialist Nurse or Doctor about what might happen next.

**It is important that you don't arrive at the unit without telephoning beforehand, to book an appointment. This is to make sure that the nursing staff can begin to assess your condition and confirm you are being seen in the right unit.**

## Where to come to

The Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust runs two EPAU's; one at the Horton General Hospital in Banbury and one in the Community Centre at Rose Hill in Oxford.

**Horton General Hospital EPAU** is located in the Women's Day Surgery Unit at the Horton General Hospital, Oxford Road, Banbury OX19 9AL. Come in through the main entrance by the Emergency Department, turn right and the unit is on the right-hand side towards the restaurant.

The unit is open Monday to Friday, from 8.00am until 6.00pm. Please telephone the unit to make an appointment beforehand.

Tel: **01295 229 090**

**Rose Hill EPAU** is located in the Rose Hill Community Centre on Carole's Way, Rose Hill, Oxford, OX4 4HF . Although it is based in the community, it is part of the Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) and you will be seen by doctors and Specialist Nurses.

The unit is open Monday to Friday, from 8.00am until 6.00pm.

On a Saturday, the unit runs a clinic in the Diagnostic Suite in the Women's Centre at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Headington, Oxford, OX3 9DU. The telephone number is the same for both locations. Please telephone to make an appointment beforehand.

Tel: **01865 221 142**

If you have been given this information outside the normal unit opening hours, please call the next working day in the morning, between 8.30am and 10.30am.

We understand that waiting to make your appointment can be an anxious time, but remember that you have seen an Emergency Department doctor or a member of the Emergency Department staff, who feels that you are well enough to go home and do not need to be admitted to hospital.

## Signs to look out for

Please call **01865 221 142** if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- your bleeding increases and you are having to change your sanitary pads every half an hour to an hour
- your pain has increased, even if you only have pain on one side
- you feel dizzy and unwell
- you are experiencing shoulder pain.

These symptoms may be a sign that you have an ectopic pregnancy. This is when the pregnancy is not in your womb (uterus) but in one of your fallopian tubes.

Please call **01865 221 142** even if you had planned on making an appointment at the Horton General Hospital EPAU. This is a 24 hour number, which connects to the Inpatient Gynaecology ward at the John Radcliffe Hospital outside clinic hours.

Alternatively, you can call your Emergency GP's number (your own GP's surgery should have a taped phone message with emergency numbers) or go to your nearest Emergency Department.

## **What to expect at the EPAU**

The EPAU will assess you if you are experiencing bleeding and/or pain and are less than 16 weeks pregnant.

You will be reviewed by a Specialist Nurse or a doctor and are likely to be offered an ultrasound scan. This may be on the same day as your appointment.

This will be an abdominal ultrasound, when the scan probe is moved over your tummy to create an image on the screen, and/or a vaginal ultrasound. This uses an internal probe, which is placed just inside your vagina and can give a clearer picture of what is happening in your womb.

You will need a full bladder for your ultrasound; drinking water is available in the clinic.

You may also need to have blood tests or an internal examination. The Specialist Nurse or doctor will explain this to you, if it is needed.

Sometimes a pregnancy is too small to see on either type of ultrasound. It may take us a few days or even a few weeks to detect a heartbeat, depending on how many weeks pregnant you are. This means that we won't be able to make a diagnosis immediately and you may need another ultrasound at a later date.

You might also need further blood tests, to monitor the levels of pregnancy hormone in your blood. This will help us know whether this is a healthy pregnancy.

## **How long will the appointment take?**

It is difficult to predict how long your appointment might be. You will need to wait for your ultrasound scan, if you are having one, and again to see the doctor or the Specialist Nurse afterwards. You may also need to wait for test results. You will then need to discuss what happens next with the Specialist Nurse or doctor. Please come prepared to spend 2-3 hours at the clinic.

We would be grateful if you could make arrangements for childcare/collecting children from school. Children can become bored during the clinic visit and it is important that you are able to take in all the information you are given during your appointment. If you are unable to make childcare arrangements, please bring something to amuse your children, as there are no toys or play facilities available in the clinic.

You may find it helpful to bring your partner or a friend with you, to support you and keep you company.

## **What should I expect while waiting for my appointment?**

We know that this is a worrying time for you and waiting for your appointment can be an uncertain and anxious time.

Women are often advised to rest in bed while they are bleeding, but this seems to make little difference to the final outcome. If you wish, you may return to work and your usual activities once you feel happy to do so. It can be a good distraction to continue with normal everyday tasks.

We recommend that you use sanitary towels rather than tampons whilst you are bleeding, to avoid the risk of infection.

Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that having sexual intercourse while you are bleeding can cause miscarriage, it is advisable to avoid this, just as a precaution. It is usually safe to return to sexual intercourse once the bleeding has stopped and at all other times during your pregnancy.

## **Further information**

More details about what will happen during your appointment are available on the clinic website, which can be found through the OUH website: [www.ouh.nhs.uk](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk)

### **Other links you might find helpful are:**

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

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

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

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

## Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: EPAU with contribution from ED Medical Lead  
September 2021  
Review: September 2024  
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
[www.ouh.nhs.uk/information](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/information)



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