

Ectopic Pregnancy

Ectopic pregnancies occur when a fertilized egg implants outside of the main cavity of the uterus, most commonly in one of the fallopian tubes.

Ectopic pregnancy may be treated with either medication or surgery depending on your doctor's assessment when you seek treatment. As you did not undergo surgery, you have been given a medication called methotrexate to help stop the growth of the fertilized egg. It may be given as an injection or as a pill by mouth.



Normal

Ectopic

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When to Get Help

See a pharmacist, or call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for the hearing impaired) if:

- You have questions about your medication & condition

See your primary care provider, or call 811 (711 for the hearing impaired) if:

- You develop new symptoms like bleeding.
- You have questions or need more information.

Go to the Emergency Department or Urgent Care if:

- You have increasing pain which does not improve with pain medications or that involves entire stomach area or shoulders.
- You have heavy vaginal bleeding – soaking pad every 1-2 hours for 6 hours.
- You are feeling weak, lightheaded, dizzy or faint

To Learn More:

- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca

Recommended Follow-Up

You will have serial beta-hCG monitoring (pregnancy hormone) through blood tests, to ensure that the levels are decreasing as the medication works. For patients with methotrexate treatment, your tests will be on days 4, 7 and every week after that until the result is 0.

It is also important to avoid sexual intercourse until the beta-hCG is zero.

☐ **Follow up in ___ days.**

Name of Provider

Reason

Date/Time

Location

Contact Info

☐ _____
☐ _____



How to Care for Yourself at Home

As it takes 1-2 weeks to remove the ectopic pregnancy, it is important to listen to your body and rest, avoiding strenuous activities for 1-2 weeks following the advice of your doctor. You can use a hot water bottle or heating pad to help with the pain as your body heals.

If you are trying to get pregnant, it is important for your body and mind to recover from this. Give yourself 2 menstrual cycles before trying again. Also, you have a higher risk of ectopic pregnancy in the future so be aware of similar symptoms in future and seek medical attention early.

Medication

Start by taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever, aches and sweats, if no allergies. Check the bottle of the medication you have purchased for instructions but we suggest:



Acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol ®, Paracetamol)

- 500-1000 mg every 4-6 hours as needed while awake, with water (Max: 4000mg/day).
- If you have liver disease or drink over 3 alcoholic beverages per day: Maximum dose: 3000mg per day.
- Do not use this medicine for longer than 5-7 days. Speak to your primary care provider if you need to use this for longer.

Ibuprofen (e.g., Advil ®, Motrin ®)

- 200-400 mg every 6-8 hours as needed while awake, taken with a small snack (Max: 1200mg/day).
- Avoid taking this medication for longer than 5-7 days. See your primary care provider if you need to use this for longer.
- Avoid this medication if you are over 65, pregnant, or have the following conditions: severe liver or kidney disease, peptic ulcer disease or heart failure.
- Speak to your primary care provider before taking this if you have a history of stroke, GERD, inflammatory bowel disease, liver cirrhosis, or ischemic vascular disease.
- Do not take this with other NSAID medications, such as naproxen (e.g. Aleve ®) or celecoxib (e.g., Celebrex ®).

Ectopic Pregnancy Discharge Instructions - continued

- Avoid aspirin as it may increase the risk of bleeding.

Your pharmacist can help you understand how to take the medication properly, manage potential side effects, and avoid interactions with other medications or supplements you may be using.

Diet

- A balanced healthy diet is important.
- Ensure you are drinking plenty of fluids to keep well hydrated.



Activity

- Rest but also do easy activities such as short walks.
- Avoid strenuous activities.
- Complete follow up ultrasounds and/or bloodwork, if ordered by the doctor.
- DO NOT use tampons. Use sanitary pads as needed until the bleeding stops.
- DO NOT have sexual intercourse until the bleeding stops and your doctor has said it is safe to have sex.
- Showers are safe and can provide comfort. Baths, however, are not recommended until the bleeding has stopped.
- DO NOT use douches or insert other creams into the vagina unless a doctor says it's safe.
- Attend any follow up appointments arranged for you.



Notes:

Additional Information

- BC Women's Hospital: Ectopic Pregnancy
http://www.bcwomens.ca/Gynecology-Site/Documents/Repro%20Med/BCW933EctopicPregnancy_May2014.pdf

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https://emergencycarebc.ca/clinical_resource/patient-information-sheet/ectopic-pregnancy/

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The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team. This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.



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