

become pregnant and for the first 3 months to reduce the risk of neural tube defects, (e.g. spina bifida), in the baby. You will remain at a slightly increased risk of having another ectopic pregnancy because you have had this one, but most women go on and have an entirely normal pregnancy after an ectopic pregnancy. Your GP or midwife can arrange an early scan, in your next pregnancy to confirm that it is correctly sited inside your womb.

An ectopic pregnancy can be a very traumatic experience and it means coming to terms with the loss of a baby as well as your future fertility. Please see further resources and contacts below.

Contact information

Ward 19 at The James Cook University Hospital – Telephone: 01642 854519

Friarage Maternity Day Unit – Telephone: 01609 763134 (Mon-Fri 9-5)

Gynae Outpatients at The James Cook University Hospital – Telephone: 01642 854243

Further resources

The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust
www.ectopic.org.uk
Telephone: 02077332653

We Can Talk www.wecantalk.org
Telephone: 0345 0450620

Alliance Psychological Support Services Ltd. Telephone: 01642 352747

Comments, compliments, concerns or complaints

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is concerned about the quality of care you receive and strives to maintain high standards of health care.

However we do appreciate that there may be an occasion where you, or your family, feel dissatisfied with the standard of service you receive. Please do not hesitate to tell us about your concerns as this helps us to learn from your experience and to improve services for future patients.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

This service aims to advise and support patients, families and carers and help sort out problems quickly on your behalf. This service is available, and based, at The James Cook University Hospital but also covers the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton, our community hospitals and community health services. Please ask a member of staff for further information.

If you require this information in a different format please contact Freephone 0800 0282451

Author: Obstetrics and Gynaecology Services

The James Cook University Hospital
Marton Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW.
Switchboard: 01642 850850

Version 3,
Issue Date: November 2017
Review Date: November 2019

Medical Management of ectopic pregnancy

The James Cook University Hospital and the Friarage Hospital

Gynaecology
Patient Information

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Introduction

You have been diagnosed with an ectopic pregnancy which is a pregnancy located outside your womb.

Pregnancies cannot develop normally outside the womb and need to be treated to prevent you becoming unwell.

You may be suitable for treatment with the drug **Methotrexate**.

This drug prevents the pregnancy developing any further by stopping the pregnancy from growing.

Treatment

Before the treatment is given you will need to have some blood tests. The treatment is usually given by a single injection into the muscle of your bottom.

You will need to return to Gynaecology Outpatients / Ward 19 at The James Cook Hospital or MDU at the Friarage Hospital for blood tests on day 4 and day 7 after the injection. These blood tests are to monitor your blood levels of hCG (pregnancy hormone) to ensure that they are falling appropriately.

Blood tests may continue for a month or two until the hormone levels are negative so you will need to come back every week for this. **You should avoid getting pregnant by using reliable contraception for at least three months, ie condoms.**

A few days after the injection, it is usual to begin to bleed and this bleeding can last between a few days and up to 6 weeks. It is usual to have some discomfort initially but as long as this is not severe and you are feeling well this is nothing to worry about. If the discomfort persists for longer than 10 days, or is severe and is not helped by taking paracetamol, or you feel faint, you will need to contact the ward 19 or MDU at Friarage Hospital immediately as this may be a sign that the tube has ruptured.

Most women only need one injection but in some cases a further injection may be required if the hormone levels are not decreasing.

What are the side effects?

Sometimes you may notice some mild abdominal pain. This tends to occur on day 3 or 4 after treatment. Many people feel very tired. Other occasional side effects include nausea, indigestion, diarrhoea and sore mouth.

There is a chance that this treatment might not work and that you may still need to have your ectopic pregnancy treated by an operation

We would therefore ask you to call the ward immediately with any of the following symptoms:- ie shoulder tip pain, dizziness, increasing or severe onset of pain or heavy bleeding.

There are a few dos and don'ts you need to know when you take this drug:

1. You should avoid sitting in the sun for the first two days after the injection.
2. Inform any health professionals that are involved in your care that you have been given this drug.
3. You should report any bleeding from your gums or symptoms of infection.
4. You will need to come to ward 19 / Gynaecology outpatients for blood tests on days 4 and 7 after the injection, then weekly until the hormone levels are negative.
5. Someone should be with you at all times and be able to bring you into hospital if you are unwell.
6. **In the first week avoid anti-inflammatory drugs** e.g. ibuprofen.
7. Refrain from drinking alcohol until the hormone levels are negative.

Discharge information

We would advise you to use reliable contraception for 3 months after treatment with Methotrexate to ensure that the drug is completely out of your system.

Methotrexate interferes with **folic acid**, which is a very important vitamin in the body in early pregnancy. Once you feel ready to try for another pregnancy it is important to take **folic acid** supplements (400 micrograms daily) both before you