

Early Pregnancy Unit (EPU) Clinic Attendance

The Early Pregnancy Unit (EPU) is a dedicated specialist department that manages specific problems in early pregnancy. The most common concerns are vaginal bleeding or pain. Light vaginal bleeding and abdominal cramps are common in early pregnancy. However, they may also be the first signs of a potential problem with the pregnancy, such as a miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy.

Clinics are held **by appointment** on Monday – Friday from 7.30 am until 1.00 pm. The unit is open for administrative purposes until 3.30 pm. If you have a query about your appointment or cannot attend an appointment please contact us at 01 – 817 6846.

How do I get an appointment?

- Your healthcare record and details will be forwarded to the unit within 24 hours of you attending the Assessment and Emergency Room (Monday to Friday) or on Monday morning (if you attend over the weekend).
- You will then be contacted with a date and time to attend for examination and ultrasound.
- This appointment will be prioritised based on the number of weeks of your pregnancy, the amount of bleeding and what the doctor's findings were when you were examined.
- Emergency cases take priority but usually you will be given the next available scan appointment.
- You will receive a telephone call from the EPU with this appointment so please ensure that you give your correct contact details when registering.
- There are limits to what an ultrasound scan can show at six weeks of pregnancy or less. Therefore, if your scan or examination findings suggest you are approximately 6 weeks pregnant or less, then a further scan will be arranged for 7 to 10 days later. This will allow time for the scan findings to change and to help us advise you as to the likely outcome of the pregnancy.

What to expect at your appointment

- On arrival, you will be given a laminated number when you register your attendance with the receptionist. This lets you know the order in which patients will be called to see the clinical team. Please note that as this is an emergency service, some assessments may take longer than others.

- 'Blood test only' clinics are held daily in EPU so it may appear that other patients are called before you.
- Your assessment will include a medical history, an examination and an ultrasound scan. This often involves an internal (vaginal) examination and a vaginal scan. This helps us to provide the most accurate information possible about your pregnancy.
- In some cases the examination or scan findings may be unclear and additional blood tests may be taken. These test results are usually available within 24 hours and **we will contact you** with the results and discuss your care with you.
- In some instances, follow up scans may be needed before a diagnosis can be made and these appointments will be made for you.

What should I do if the bleeding gets heavy or I feel unwell?

If the bleeding becomes heavy or you have worsening abdominal pain or pain in your shoulder tip you should return to the Assessment and Emergency Unit for review.

In the case of an emergency you can get medical help from:

- Your General Practitioner (GP) or midwife
- The Rotunda Hospital at 01 – 817 1700 and ask for the Assessment and Emergency Unit
- The Accident and Emergency department at your local hospital

Support and counselling are also available from:

- Bereavement Social Worker 01 – 817 2504 or 01 – 817 1700, bleep 699
- Bereavement Support Midwife 01 – 817 1700, bleep 777
- Chaplain 01 – 817 1700, bleep 334

Support agencies include:

The Miscarriage Association of Ireland at - www.miscarriage.ie or phone 01 - 873 5701.

Ectopic Pregnancy Ireland at www.ectopicireland.ie or phone 089 - 436 5742.