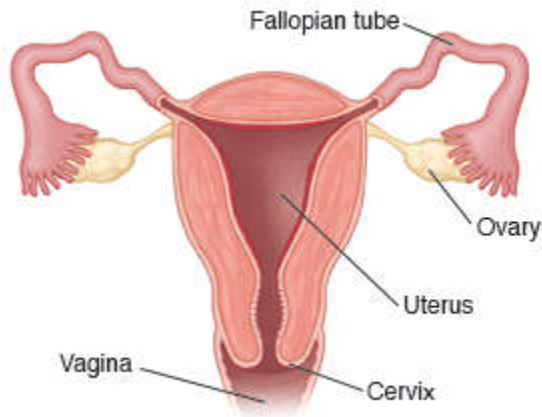


Abdominal Pain and Early Pregnancy



The tests you had show that you are pregnant, but the exact cause of your pain isn't clear.

Some pain and bleeding are common early in pregnancy. Often they stop, and you can go on to have a normal pregnancy and baby. Other times the pain or bleeding can be signs of a miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy. An ectopic pregnancy is a very serious problem. At this time it is unclear if your pregnancy will continue normally, if you will have a miscarriage, or if you could have an ectopic pregnancy. Below is some information about this.

Miscarriage

At this time we don't know whether you will have a miscarriage, or if things will clear up and your pregnancy will continue normally. We understand that this is emotionally difficult. There is little we can say to change the way you feel. But understand that miscarriages are common.

About 1 or 2 out of every 10 pregnancies end this way. Some end even before you know you are pregnant. This happens for a number of reasons, and usually we never figure out why. It's important you know that it is not your fault. It didn't happen because you did anything wrong.

Having sex or exercising does not cause a miscarriage. These activities are usually safe unless you have pain or bleeding or your doctor tells you to stop. Even minor falls won't cause a miscarriage. Miscarriages happen because things were not developing as they were supposed to. No medicine can prevent a miscarriage.

Ectopic pregnancy

In a normal pregnancy, the fertilized egg attaches to the wall of the womb (uterus). In an ectopic or tubal pregnancy, the fertilized egg attaches outside the uterus, usually in the fallopian tube. Very rarely, the egg attaches to an ovary or somewhere else in the abdomen. An ectopic pregnancy is much less common than a miscarriage, but it is very

serious. The baby cannot survive, and as it grows it can rupture the tube. This can cause internal bleeding and even death. Risk factors for an ectopic are:

- An ectopic pregnancy in the past
- Pelvic inflammatory disease, or PID
- Endometriosis
- Smoking
- An IUD

Additional tests

Because we don't know what's causing your symptoms, you will need more tests to figure out what the problem is. You may need the following.

Ultrasound

An ultrasound can usually find a normal pregnancy as early as 4 to 5 weeks along. If the ultrasound does not show the baby inside the uterus, it means one of the following.

- You have a normal pregnancy less than 4 weeks along
- You are having or recently had a miscarriage
- You have an ectopic pregnancy

Quantitative HCG

This test measures the amount of a pregnancy hormone in your blood. Comparing today's test result to a repeat test in 2 days will show whether you have a normal pregnancy.

Laparoscopy

This is a type of surgery. The healthcare provider will put a tube with a light inside your belly (abdomen) to look directly at your pelvic organs. This test is used when it is not safe to wait 2 days for blood test results.

Important information

If you do have an ectopic pregnancy, there is a small chance that the growing fetus can tear the fallopian tube. This can cause severe internal bleeding. If this happens, you may have:

- Sudden severe pain in your lower abdomen
- Vaginal bleeding
- Weakness, dizziness, and sometimes fainting

If any of these symptoms occur:

- Call **911** or return right away to the hospital.

- Don't drive yourself.
- Don't go to your healthcare provider's office or to a clinic. Go to the hospital.

Home care

Follow these guidelines to help care for yourself at home:

- Rest until your next exam. Don't do anything strenuous.
- Eat a light diet with foods that are easy to digest.
- Don't have sex until your healthcare provider says it's OK.

Follow-up care

Follow up with your healthcare provider, or as advised. If you were told to have a repeat blood test in 2 days, it's important to get it done.

If you had an X-ray or ultrasound, a radiologist will review it. You will be told of any new findings that may affect your care.

Call 911

Call 911 if you have any of these:

- Severe pain and very heavy bleeding
- Severe lightheadedness, passing out, or fainting
- Rapid heart rate
- Trouble breathing
- Confused or difficulty waking up

When to seek medical advice

Call your healthcare provider right away if any of these occur:

- The pain in your abdomen gets worse, either suddenly or gradually.
- You are dizzy or weak when you stand.
- You have heavy vaginal bleeding. This means soaking 1 pad an hour for 3 hours.
- You have vaginal bleeding for more than 5 days.
- You have repeated vomiting or diarrhea.
- The pain in your abdomen moves to the lower right.
- You have blood in your vomit or bowel movements. This will be dark red or black.
- You have a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider.

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