

**Patient  
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# Vaginal bleeding and pain in early pregnancy

## Introduction

Vaginal bleeding in early pregnancy (less than 16 weeks) is common. It is not always a sign of a problem and may settle on its own. Most women who experience bleeding or pain do not need to stay in hospital but it is important that they see a specialist to rule out some of the worrying causes.

We refer many women who are experiencing bleeding or pain in early pregnancy to the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (EPAU) so you can talk to a specialist. Important causes to rule out include miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy (where the pregnancy grows outside of the womb, usually in the fallopian tubes).

If you have been referred to the EPAU, we do not think you need to stay in the hospital but we would like you to see a specialist about your symptoms. We understand this is an anxious time and hope the information below helps reassure you.

You can expect to be contacted by phone within 24 hours to arrange an appointment at the clinic.

## What happens at EPAU?

You will be seen by a member of the team (this may be a doctor or nurse) who will assess you and arrange for any necessary tests such as blood tests and ultrasound scans. Once the results of these tests are received you will be seen again to discuss them. The staff at EPAU will give you help and advice depending on your test results and guide you through what will happen next. It may not always be possible to find a cause for your symptoms at your first appointment and followup appointments may be arranged.

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## When you attend EPAU

It is helpful if you can:

- bring an early morning urine sample
- drink a pint or so of water before you come to the clinic so your bladder is relatively full (this helps with the ultrasound scan)
- bring your pregnancy notes if you have them.

## Where is EPAU?

EPAU is in Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. From Monday to Friday it is run in the Women's Centre. At weekends and bank holidays, EPAU is located on Ward 2A. You will be told which department to attend when you are contacted with your appointment time.

Depending on when your symptoms began, you can usually expect to be contacted, by telephone, within 24 hours to arrange your appointment at the EPAU.

## Contact information

If you need further advice or you are still waiting for EPAU to contact you, please call the helpline on the number below.

### **EPAU**

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 6668

Available 24 hours

If you become more unwell, experience heavy vaginal bleeding, severe abdominal pain or collapse you should go to an emergency department as soon as possible.

## Further information

### **NHS 111**

Tel: 111

### **NHS Choices**

Website: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/vaginalbleeding-pregnant.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/vaginalbleeding-pregnant.aspx)

### **Association of Early Pregnancy Units (AEPU)**

Website: [www.earlypregnancy.org.uk](http://www.earlypregnancy.org.uk)

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**Miscarriage Association**

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

**Ectopic Pregnancy Trust**

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

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