

Emergency Department Pregnancy of Unknown Location (PUL)

General Information

A pregnancy of unknown location, or PUL, is a term used when a woman has a positive pregnancy test and no pregnancy can be seen on ultrasound. This could be because:

1. the pregnancy is too early to be seen on ultrasound
2. the pregnancy has already passed (miscarriage) so it can no longer be seen on ultrasound
3. the pregnancy is outside the uterus (ectopic pregnancy)

The diagnosis of PUL has been made because you have all of the following:

1. a positive pregnancy test (B-hCG)
2. no previous ultrasound in this pregnancy showing that the pregnancy sac was clearly seen in your uterus
3. a pregnancy cannot be seen on the ultrasound during this visit

Most patients with a PUL will not suffer any serious problems. However, 5 to 10% (5 to 10 out of 100 patients) will be diagnosed with a pregnancy outside the uterus. This is called an ectopic pregnancy. If an ectopic pregnancy is not diagnosed and treated early, it can be life threatening. For this reason you will be monitored by a doctor until a pregnancy is seen within the uterus, or in the case of a miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy until your pregnancy test (blood or urine) is zero or negative.

Instructions

1. You have been given a requisition to go to a laboratory for a B-hCG (blood test) in 48 hours. You can go to any laboratory you choose. You need to phone the Rapid Access Gynecology Clinic (RAGC) once you have completed the blood work. The phone number is 604-875-4111 ext. 69722. If your blood test is done on the week-end or on a statutory holiday, we ask that you phone on the next working (business) day.
2. After the result of your blood test is available, the doctors at the RAGC will review your file and call you with instructions about what test or appointment you will need next.
3. If applicable, BC Women's Hospital offers a Pregnancy Loss Support Group. To attend, or for more information on the group, call 604-875-2149.
4. If applicable, you can try to get pregnant again once your pregnancy test is negative (or zero) and you have experience one normal period. You should discuss this with your doctor if you have any questions.

Return to Emergency if any of the following develop:

- You feel faint or dizzy.
- You experience severe pain on only one side of your abdomen.

For more information or questions contact HealthLinkBC at 811.

For more copies, go online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>
or email pchem@vch.ca and quote Catalogue No. **GH.140.P740**
© Vancouver Coastal Health, September 2018

The information in this document is intended solely for the person
to whom it was given by the health care team.
www.vch.ca