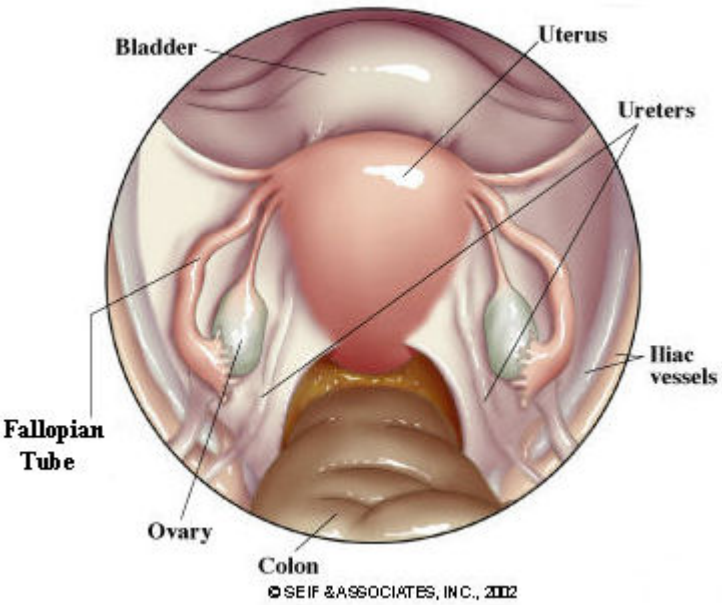
# Bleeding Ectopic Pregnancy

Ectopic pregnancy is a pregnancy located outside of the uterus (womb). An ectopic pregnancy is usually located in the fallopian tube but rarely it can be located on the ovary in the pelvis or on the intestine in the abdomen. **Immediate treatment is necessary because if it ruptures it can cause severe hemorrhage.** Ectopic pregnancy is the leading cause of death in the first three months of pregnancy.




If the ectopic pregnancy is found soon enough, it can be treated with medicine. This medicine is called methotrexate. If the pregnancy is 1½ in. (3.5 cms) or larger or ruptures, surgery to remove the pregnancy becomes necessary.

## CAUSES

- Blocked tubes from scarring caused by infection.
- Other risk factors include:
  - Previous ectopic pregnancy.
  - Surgery on the Fallopian tube.
  - DES, estrogen hormone given to the mother during her pregnancy.
  - In vitro fertilization with stimulating the ovaries to produce eggs.
  - Older women, over age 35, getting pregnant.
  - Women who smoke.

## GENERAL SYMPTOMS WITH ECTOPIC PREGNANCY

- Abdominal discomfort or pain.
- Vaginal spotting or bleeding.
- Pain with intercourse.
- Pregnancy symptoms.
  - Feeling of fullness in the abdomen.
  - Missed menstrual period.
  - Nausea.
  - Vomiting.
  - Tiredness

## SYMPTOMS OF BLEEDING FROM AN ECTOPIC PREGNANCY

- All of the above.
- Shoulder pain from blood between the liver and the diaphragm,

## SYMPTOMS OF A RUPTURED ECTOPIC PREGNANCY

- All of the above.
- Severe and sudden abdominal pain. This often occurs when having a bowel movement.

## DIAGNOSIS

- Ultrasound.
- Blood tests.
- CT scan.
- If the pregnancy is not confirmed by any of the above tests, a laparoscopic examination may have to be done.

## TREATMENT

- **When a bleeding, ruptured or large ectopic pregnancy is confirmed, it is a surgical emergency.**
  - The whole Fallopian tube may have to be removed.
  - If the rupture is not too big, the tube may be saved and repaired later.
  - If the other tube is open, you may still get pregnant again.
- Laparoscopic surgery.
- Abdominal surgery.
- If you have lost a lot of blood, you may need a blood transfusion.
- An intravenous will be placed in you to give you fluids.
- You may receive an antibiotic intravenously and after the surgery.
- You may receive a Rho-gam shot if you are Rh negative and the father is Rh positive to prevent problems with your next pregnancy.

## LET YOUR CAREGIVER KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING BEFORE SURGERY:

- Allergies you may have to foods, drinks or medicine.
- Medicine you are taking, over the counter, herbal, eye drops, creams or illegal drugs.
- If you smoke.
- Use of steroids, oral or creams.
- Previous problems with anesthesia.
- History of blood clots, bleeding or other blood problems.
- Previous surgery.
- Other medical problems.

## AFTER YOUR SURGERY AND HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

You will be taken to the recovery area where a nurse will watch and check your progress. Once you are awake, stable, and taking fluids well, you will be taken to your room. You will usually be allowed to go home in one to two days.

- Once home, an ice pack applied to your operative site may help with discomfort and keep swelling down.
- Do not take aspirin.
- Change dressings as directed.
- Do not have sexual intercourse until your caregiver tells you.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Do not lift anything over 5 pounds.
- Resume your regular diet.
- You may have to take iron medication if your blood count is low.
- Only take over-the-counter medicines as needed for pain or discomfort **unless your caregiver has instructed you not to or given medications which would interfere with this.**
- See your caregiver for after surgery for follow up visits as directed.
- You can get pregnant again if the Fallopian tube is removed and the other tube is normal. Ask your caregiver when it is safe to try to get pregnant again.

## SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increased bleeding from the wound.
- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- Pus is coming from wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 100.4°F (38.0°C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.

## SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a rash.
- You develop difficulty breathing.
- You develop an allergy or side effects to medications given.
- You have pain in your leg.

- You have chest pain.
- You become dizzy or pass out.

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