



ECTOPIC PREGNANCY FACT SHEET

Ectopic pregnancy, also called tubal pregnancy, refers to a pregnancy in which the fertilized egg implants outside of the uterus. Most ectopic pregnancies implant in a fallopian tube, but they may also be located in an ovary, the cervix, or the abdomen. This happens rarely, in approximately one out of every 100 pregnancies. Ectopic pregnancy is often difficult to diagnose.

An ectopic pregnancy can't proceed normally -- the fertilized egg can't survive.

Problems occur with a tubal pregnancy when the pregnancy enlarges, causing the tube to stretch, and eventually tear. This is an emergency situation, requiring immediate surgical treatment. It is a very serious, potentially deadly, complication. Until a pregnancy in your uterus is confirmed, an ectopic pregnancy must be considered as a possibility.

Early treatment of an ectopic pregnancy can help preserve the chance for future healthy pregnancies.

Some conditions that increase a woman's chances of having an ectopic pregnancy are:

- Previous infection of the uterus or fallopian tubes
- Previous abdominal surgery
- Previous surgery of the fallopian tubes, including tubal ligation (having your "tubes tied")
- Use of an IUD for birth control
- Previous ectopic pregnancy

Some possible warning signs of ectopic pregnancy include:

- Pain in the lower abdomen, especially if it is on one side only
- Vomiting
- Fainting, dizziness, lightheadedness, shortness of breath, unusual feelings of weakness, or unusual sweating
- Urinary or rectal pressure and/or tenderness
- Pain with sexual intercourse
- Pregnancy symptoms (nausea, breast enlargement, etc.) that continue for 3-4 days *after* an abortion

These symptoms are mentioned only as a warning. You should not panic and reach the conclusion that you have an ectopic pregnancy, even if you experience one of the symptoms listed above. However, you *should* be aware of the possible signs, and understand the importance of acting on these symptoms.

Please call your regular health care provider, or Scotsdale Women's Center, IMMEDIATELY if you:

- Have *severe* abdominal pain or cramping, especially on only one side
- Have shoulder pain
- Are feeling faint and weak

ECTOPIC PREGNANCY CAN BE A LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION. If you cannot reach assistance within a few minutes, GO TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM IMMEDIATELY. Tell them that you might have an ectopic pregnancy.