

Your Pregnancy Blood Test Explained

If you have had an embryo transfer and have had a positive urine pregnancy test you will have been asked to attend the clinic for a blood test.

This blood test is called a hCG (human chorionic gonadotrophin) blood test and is performed to determine the amount of pregnancy hormone in your system.

The nurses will check your results for you and will inform you if the result is adequate or whether the test needs repeating. If the result is adequate, we will arrange an early pregnancy scan for you and further hCG blood tests will not be required.

Please be aware that there is no 'normal' value. The hCG result will differ from woman to woman and will depend on when the blood test was taken. If the clinical team feel that a repeat blood test is required then a nurse will inform you and will support you through this process.

Why does my blood test need to be repeated?

Your hCG result provides us with some information about the viability of your pregnancy. If your result is lower than expected then this may be a sign that the pregnancy is not developing as hoped. If this is the case you may be asked to attend the clinic again for a repeat hCG blood test or you may be asked to perform a repeat urine pregnancy test at home.

It is important that you carry on with your medication until you are told otherwise.

Suspected biochemical pregnancy

If your test result is significantly lower than expected then it may be that a biochemical pregnancy has occurred. A biochemical pregnancy happens when the body recognises that an embryo has been introduced, but for reasons unknown the embryo has not gone on to develop. Sadly most biochemical pregnancies are not viable and come to their own natural conclusion.

If we suspect that a biochemical pregnancy has occurred you may be asked to attend for a repeat hCG blood test or to perform a repeat urine pregnancy test at home. This is usually done 7 days after your initial test but may be repeated sooner or later depending on the clinical scenario.

You will be asked to continue your medication until the status of the pregnancy is confirmed. You may experience some vaginal bleeding during this time but we kindly ask that you carry on with your medication until told otherwise. If you have any concerns about your symptoms during the waiting period you are invited to call the nurses who will be happy to advise you.

Suspected ectopic pregnancy

An ectopic pregnancy is a pregnancy that has occurred outside of the uterus. If we suspect an ectopic pregnancy then you may be asked to attend the clinic for a repeat blood test. This may be repeated a week after your initial blood test or may be repeated sooner if clinically indicated. It can take some time for a clinical picture to emerge, therefore you may be asked to attend the clinic for several tests over a matter of days or weeks. In the meantime you will be asked to monitor your symptoms and must inform us immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Vaginal bleeding
- Tummy pain, particularly if this is one-sided
- Shoulder tip pain
- Discomfort when going to the toilet
- Sharp, sudden intense pain in your tummy
- Dizziness, feeling sick and/or looking very pale

If you have experienced an ectopic pregnancy before it is important that you inform the clinical team ASAP, as your risk of a further ectopic pregnancy may be higher. Please note, you are still at risk of an ectopic pregnancy, even if you have had both of your fallopian tubes removed. You are also at risk if you have had a previous caesarean section.

Pregnancy of unknown location

When you attend the clinic for your early pregnancy scan we hope to see the pregnancy developing within the uterus. If we cannot see a pregnancy within the uterus but you continue to have a positive pregnancy test then this is known as a pregnancy of unknown location (PUL). If we suspect a PUL you will most likely be asked to attend either the clinic or an early pregnancy unit for close monitoring. If you experience any of the symptoms outlined above we ask that you call the clinic as a matter of urgency.

Suspected heterotopic pregnancy

A heterotopic pregnancy is a rare complication whereby an intra-uterine and extra-uterine pregnancy develop simultaneously. You may be at risk of a heterotopic pregnancy if you have had more than one embryo transferred. The signs and symptoms of a heterotopic pregnancy are similar to those of an ectopic pregnancy (although you may experience no symptoms) and you must inform us immediately if you experience any of the symptoms listed above.

IMPORTANT: If you are experiencing any symptoms of an ectopic or heterotopic pregnancy or have any concerns about your pregnancy symptoms then you MUST call us as a matter of urgency. In a medical emergency please go straight to A&E and inform the staff there that you are a fertility patient of ours.

Support

We understand that waiting for test results is an extremely distressing time for our patients. Your safety and wellbeing is our utmost priority and we strive to resolve these clinical uncertainties as quickly as possible.

The CFC staff are keen to support you through this process and invite you to call at any time, day or night, for further advice. We also have an in-house fertility counsellor who can provide emotional support and this can be given via the telephone or in person at the clinic.

Please find some useful numbers below:

Nursing Staff: 02381 206015 or 02381 204414 (Mon-Fri 8am-4pm)

Out of hours number: 07767463126 (Evenings from 4pm until 8am and 24hrs over the weekend)

Admin: 02381 206980

Medi-Emo App: Downloaded from the App Store or Google Play using code CFSOU