






What is an Ectopic Pregnancy?

An **ectopic pregnancy** occurs when a fertilised egg implants **outside the uterus**, most commonly in the **fallopian tube**. Less commonly, it can occur in the **ovary, cervix, or abdomen**. Unfortunately, an ectopic pregnancy **cannot continue** because these areas **cannot support a growing baby**.




If left untreated, an ectopic pregnancy can **cause serious internal bleeding** when it grows and ruptures nearby structures. This is a **life-threatening emergency**.

What Are the Symptoms of an Ectopic Pregnancy?

At first, symptoms may feel like a normal pregnancy, including **nausea and breast tenderness**. As the pregnancy grows, symptoms may include:  **Abdominal pain**, often on one side  **Vaginal bleeding** (less common but possible)  **Shoulder tip pain** (caused by internal bleeding irritating the diaphragm)  **Dizziness, light-headedness, or fainting** (a sign of serious internal bleeding)

 **If you experience severe pain, dizziness, or collapse, call an ambulance immediately.**

How is an Ectopic Pregnancy Diagnosed?

Diagnosis usually involves:  **Pregnancy test** – To confirm pregnancy (blood or urine test)  **Pelvic ultrasound** – To check for pregnancy location  **Blood tests** – To measure pregnancy hormone (hCG) levels and monitor changes

How is an Ectopic Pregnancy Treated?

Treatment depends on **size, symptoms, and hormone levels**:

Medication (Methotrexate)

- Suitable if the ectopic pregnancy is **small, unruptured, and hormone levels are low**.
- The injection stops the pregnancy from growing.
- Requires **regular follow-up blood tests** for several weeks.
- **Avoid pregnancy for at least 3 months** after treatment.

Surgery

- If the ectopic pregnancy is **large, causing severe pain, or has ruptured**, surgery is needed.

- The most common procedure is **laparoscopy (keyhole surgery)** to remove the pregnancy.
 - In some cases, the affected fallopian tube may also need to be removed.
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Who is at Risk of an Ectopic Pregnancy?

Any woman with fallopian tubes can have an ectopic pregnancy, but risks are higher if:

✓ **Previous ectopic pregnancy** ✓ **History of pelvic infections (such as chlamydia or pelvic inflammatory disease)** ✓ **Previous surgery on fallopian tubes or sterilisation**
✓ **Use of an intrauterine device (IUD)** ✓ **Use of progestin-only contraception (mini-pill)** ✓ **Smoking** ✓ **Fertility treatments (e.g., IVF)**

◆ **Early detection and treatment of ectopic pregnancy can save lives. If you have symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.** 💙