ECTOPIC PREGNANCY

An ectopic pregnancy is a pregnancy that occurs outside of the uterus, usually in the fallopian tube. Many women with ectopic pregnancies experience symptoms of early pregnancy (for example: missed periods, breast tenderness, urinary frequency, nausea, fatigue) but many women have no symptoms of pregnancy at all. Most women with ectopic pregnancies have some abdominal pain; many have irregular bleeding. Because the fallopian tube is not large enough to hold a growing pregnancy, it may rupture, causing pain, and sometimes heavy internal bleeding. In some cases, this can be so severe as to be life threatening.

Any woman can have an ectopic pregnancy, but the following situations may place you at a higher risk for an ectopic pregnancy.

High Risk Factors for Ectopic Pregnancy

- Prior ectopic pregnancy
- History of chlamydia or gonorrhea
- Prior ruptured appendix
- DES exposure in utero
- Prior tubal surgery/ligation or other pelvic surgery
- Prior PIP/pelvic infection
- Endometriosis
- Use of progestin only birth control at time pregnancy occurred (e.g. Norplant, Progestasert IUD, Mini Pill, Depo)
- Prior/current IUD use

Often a series of laboratory tests is needed in order to make the diagnosis of ectopic pregnancy. If your clinician is concerned that you may have an ectopic, it is very important to follow the guidelines below.

Precautionary Guidelines

1. Stay in town and in touch with your clinician as advised.
2. Obtain laboratory and other diagnostic tests as recommended.
3. Call your clinician for your test results, and to establish a plan for your follow-up care.
4. No intercourse or vigorous activity until a definitive diagnosis is made. Vigorous activity would include jogging, dancing, aerobics, etc.
5. If you experience severe lower abdominal pain, heavy vaginal bleeding, dizziness or fainting, have someone take you to the closest hospital emergency room immediately. Tell them you might have an ectopic pregnancy. If necessary, call 911 for an ambulance.
6. If you go to the hospital, please notify your clinician or the Clinic Nurse at 510/643-7197.
7. If you have the University health insurance (SHIP), and you use any non-UHS medical facility, you will need to call the Student Health Insurance Office (510/642-5700) for insurance authorization within 24 hours of emergency care for insurance reimbursement.

Check our website: www.uhs.berkeley.edu to learn more about this medical concern or others.