

# Early pregnancy and acute gynaecology unit

Information for patients



This leaflet provides you with information about the early pregnancy and acute gynaecology unit and the services we provide.

## **What is the early pregnancy and acute gynaecology unit (EPAGU)?**

We are an emergency specialist unit. We see women with problems in the early stages of pregnancy and those with gynaecological emergencies.

## **Our staff**

The unit is staffed by a team of specialist nurses, sonographers, health care assistants and doctors. They are all trained and experienced in early pregnancy care and gynaecology.

## **Access to the unit**

Women can be referred to our unit by their GP, the emergency department, a midwife and other health professionals.

Unfortunately, at present, we cannot routinely accept self-referrals unless you have specifically been told that you can do so. This will normally only be if you have had a recent operation or have had a previous ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy or suffer from recurrent miscarriages.

## **Your appointment**

At your appointment, you will be seen by one of our nurses or doctors. Many women attending our unit will undergo an ultrasound scan as part of the appointment. In some cases, you may have an ultrasound scan performed by a sonographer prior to review.

While we make every effort to see you as near to your appointment time as possible, some consultations can take longer than expected due to the nature of the situation. Women

presenting with an emergency, and those already admitted to the hospital, may need to take priority and be seen before you. Please do let the receptionist or nursing staff know if you are feeling unwell while waiting to be seen.

Whether you are undergoing a scan or being examined by a doctor, it is our policy that an extra member of staff is present during your examination – they are known as a chaperone. If you wish to discuss this or have any concerns about your care during your time in the unit, please ask to speak to the nurse in charge.

### **Ultrasound scans**

Most ultrasound scans performed in our unit are done via the 'transvaginal' route. This means that the tip of a small ultrasound probe is inserted into the vagina.

It is not in any way damaging to a developing pregnancy and should not be painful. However, some women may experience some slight discomfort. We will ask you to pass urine to empty your bladder prior to the scan. It can be performed even if you are bleeding.

If you have never been sexually active, really do not want a transvaginal scan or are more than 12 weeks pregnant, we can perform a transabdominal scan. For this you need to have a full bladder. Unfortunately, in some cases, we are unable to gain as much clinical information from this type of scan compared to the transvaginal scan.

### **After your scan**

We aim to give you as much information as possible while you have your scan. Many women will be discharged immediately from the scan room, but we ask that you wait in our waiting room while we create a report. We will give you a copy of the report for your own records.

We may ask you to come back for a follow-up appointment which will be booked for you immediately at our reception.

If you have had blood tests or any other investigations we will ask you to call us at the following times when the nurse will be available to dedicate more time to your call:

**Barnet Hospital:** 4-5.30pm  
**Royal Free Hospital:** 5-7.30pm

Sometimes it may be necessary to admit you. We have some beds in our unit for day procedures where you will be kept comfortable until a bed is available on the ward.

### **Teaching and research**

As a teaching hospital, we aim to train the next generation of clinical staff. We often have students observing and clinical staff training to develop their skills. If you prefer to not have a student present, please let us know.

We may ask you to take part in a research study. The aim of research is to work towards improving care for women in the future. We understand that not all women wish to take part. You will be given an information leaflet and time to think about it. Participation is entirely voluntary and will not affect the care you receive.

## **Contacts**

If you have any on-going concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us for further advice:

### **Barnet Hospital early pregnancy and acute gynaecology unit**

Level 2

Phone: 020 8216 4777

Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm

Saturday: Closed

Sunday: 9am-5pm

### **Royal Free Hospital early pregnancy and acute gynaecology unit**

5<sup>th</sup> floor

Phone: 020 7472 6374

Monday to Friday: 7.30am-8pm

Saturday: 9am-5pm

Sunday: Closed



For more information about the maternity or gynaecology service at the Royal Free London, please visit our website:

[www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/maternity-services](http://www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/maternity-services)

[www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/gynaecology](http://www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/gynaecology)

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or require a list of references for it, please email: [rf.communications@nhs.net](mailto:rf.communications@nhs.net)

**This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need it in another format, for example braille, a language other than English or audio, please ask a member of staff.**

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