

SCANS & BLOOD TESTS
IN
EARLY PREGNANCY

The logo for Ulster Community & Hospitals NHS. It features a stylized, dark silhouette of the map of Northern Ireland. To the right of the map, the word "Ulster" is written vertically in a serif font. Below the map, the words "Community & Hospitals" are written in a serif font, with "NHS" in a smaller font below that.

Ulster
Community
& Hospitals
NHS

In early pregnancy if pain or bleeding occurs it is sometimes difficult to know if everything is progressing normally.

Ultrasound scans and blood tests go hand in hand to find out the cause of bleeding.

It is sometimes difficult to see the pregnancy sac clearly with an abdominal scan. In this situation an internal scan (also called a transvaginal scan) is performed.

In normal pregnancy, a pregnancy sac is seen within the womb at 5 weeks. At 7 weeks the baby's shadow and heartbeat can usually be seen.

In cases of doubt blood tests that measure the levels of pregnancy hormone (*Beta Human Chorionic Gonadotrophin : BHCG*) are carried out. Two blood tests are carried out at an interval of 48 hours.

What will this blood test tell us?

1. *Normal ongoing pregnancy* - the hormone level should double every 48 hours

2. *Miscarriage* -

the hormone levels fall in the second blood sample

3. *Ectopic pregnancy* -

(i.e. pregnancy outside the womb, commonly in the Fallopian tube)

This is suspected if:

a) The internal scan shows absence of a pregnancy sac in the womb and the BHCG hormone level confirms a pregnancy

b) Hormone levels rise, but do not double in a 48 hour period. In these cases a keyhole surgery (Laparoscopy) may be advised

How will I get these results?

You will be contacted by telephone after the second blood test result has been obtained and you will be advised of the follow-up required.

Remember

Contact your doctor or the gynaecology ward in the Ulster Hospital *Tel: (028) 9055 0453* if you have abdominal pain, vaginal bleeding or are worried about anything.

