Ectopic Pregnancy

An ectopic pregnancy is a pregnancy that implants outside of the uterus. It can occur in a fallopian tube, on an ovary, or in rare instances inside the pelvic cavity. The pregnancy cannot develop normally and may rupture causing bleeding and damage to the tube or ovary. An ectopic pregnancy can be life-threatening if not treated.

An ectopic pregnancy occurs in approximately 1% of pregnancies. Women with a history of ectopic pregnancy, chlamydia, pelvic inflammatory disease, gonorrhea and/or tubal adhesions are at higher risk. Diagnosis of an ectopic pregnancy is usually made with ultrasounds and blood hormone studies. In some instances, the drug Methotrexate at other times, a laparoscopy must be performed to surgically remove the pregnancy.

As an infertility patient you are at a statistically increased risk for an ectopic pregnancy. If you become pregnant, your blood hormone levels will be monitored and an ultrasound scheduled early in the pregnancy to verify that implantation has occurred in the uterus.

Ectopic Pregnancy Warning Signs:

- Uterine cramping
- Lower back pain
- Sharp lower abdominal pain, usually on the right or left side
- Light-headedness or fainting
- Cold sweats
- Shoulder pain
- Irregular or abnormal menstrual bleeding
- Rectal pressure

Call your office immediately if you experience any of the symptoms listed above. After hours or on weekends or holidays, call the answering service and have the on-call physician paged.