

What do I do with a pregnant woman who's bleeding?!

For those of us who don't do obstetrical medicine, seeing a woman with a first trimester bleed can be stressful and perplexing. Sometimes, the ER is just the right place for her to go, but often GPs can safely manage the initial evaluation, which is especially important to patients at a highly emotional time.

If the patient has light or moderate bleeding with cramping similar to a period:

- Order a CBC, Rh factor and serial quantitative bHCG, as well as a pelvic U/S.
- TransVAGINAL pelvic ultrasound can be done through Medical Imaging OR the Vancouver Island Women's Clinic within 24-48 hours - as early as 4 ½ weeks GA (when the bHCG >1500).
- TransABDOMINAL works for bHCG 2500.

TIP: You really need the ultrasound for dates to properly evaluate bHCG. A serial bHCG that does not rise by at least 50% after 48 hours is concerning PRIOR TO 8-9 weeks GA, when the levels can plateau and slightly decrease.

TIP: Rh factor should be done at the HOSPITAL lab, as Life Labs results can take up to a week. RHIG (WinRHO) should be administered within 72 hours through the Vancouver Island Women's Clinic, the VGH CFAU, or the ER if required.

What about On Call?

If you get a call from a patient after hours, this workup can be arranged for the following day when you are back in the office, with instructions to go to the ER if things worsen.

When to send to the ER:

- The patient is having heavy bleeding (changing a pad every 30-60 minutes for more than 3 hrs)
- There is severe pain/cramping
- The patient experiences presyncope/syncope

If the patient is in your office and unstable, call 911 for transfer to the ER.

Remember: 5-10 weeks GA is the critical point for ectopic pregnancy. Severe pain and bleeding = ER!

TRICK: During regular office hours, the Vancouver Island Women's Clinic takes referrals to evaluate, monitor and manage miscarriages. They usually see patients within 1-2 days of your call.

Find the clinic and on-call doctor phone numbers on Pathways.

For bleeding AFTER the first trimester in ANY patient, call Gynecology on call and send the patient to the hospital for urgent ultrasound and assessment.