

If In Doubt – Check It Out

Your guide to complications related to pregnancy

During pregnancy it is normal to develop symptoms that you have not experienced before due to the changes happening throughout your body. However, there are certain symptoms that should not be ignored and may require urgent medical attention. This leaflet is to advise on which symptoms you should seek immediate medical attention for, either via the Midwife Assessment Unit or A&E.

Remember it is always better to err on the side of caution.

Pre-Eclampsia

Pre-eclampsia is a condition that disrupts the blood flow between you and your baby. It is very important that it is diagnosed to help prevent serious complications to the pregnancy.

If you develop any of the following symptoms you must contact your midwife or NHS 111 as a matter of urgency:

- A new severe headache– some increase in headaches can be normal during pregnancy. This would be described as 'the worst headache' you've ever had
- Swelling, particularly of the face and neck. Swelling in your hands or feet is quite normal during pregnancy but if this significantly increases as well, speak to your midwife
- Changes to your vision
- Sudden increase in your blood pressure– whilst you won't notice these symptoms yourself, your blood pressure will be checked throughout your pregnancy

Placenta Praevia

Placenta praevia, or low-lying placenta is when your placenta remains either near to or covering your cervix. This can block your baby's route out and in some cases will require a c-section. **If you develop painless, bright red bleeding**, particularly during the last 3 months of your pregnancy, it is important you contact your midwife or NHS 111 for immediate review.

Whilst slight bleeding or spotting during your pregnancy can be harmless, **it is important that if you experience bleeding at any time throughout your pregnancy that you are reviewed urgently.**



Obstetric Cholestasis (OC)

OC is a condition that affects your liver, thought to be down to a change in hormones throughout pregnancy. Whilst serious complications are rare, it is important that if you develop the following, you speak to your midwife urgently for assessment:

- Itching– often severe, most often worse in your hands and feet and more noticeable at night. Some mild itching across your tummy is normal, but if you are at all concerned, speak to your midwife
- Jaundice– yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes
- Dark urine or pale poo

Reduced Foetal Movement

You should feel your baby start to move between 16-24 weeks of gestation. During your first pregnancy, it's not unusual for them to start moving after 20 weeks. However you should contact your midwife urgently if you are experiencing the following:

- Your baby is moving less than normal
- You are unable to feel your baby moving any more
- Your baby's pattern of movement changes


Cauda Equina Syndrome (CES)

On rare occasions, compression of the nerves at the base of your spine can lead to CES. This is a medical emergency and you should attend A&E if you develop one or more of the following:

- A sudden, new onset of loss of bladder or bowel control, an increase in difficulty passing urine or loss of sensation whilst passing urine or a bowel movement
- A sudden inability to use your legs as normal
- Numbness around your saddle (genital) region
- A new onset of persistent pins and needles or numbness in both legs
- A new loss of sensation during intercourse

Remember

Most of these conditions are rare, even if you do experience symptoms, there may be a simple explanation for them. However, it is important that any of these symptoms are checked to ensure the health of you and your baby.



Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.



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