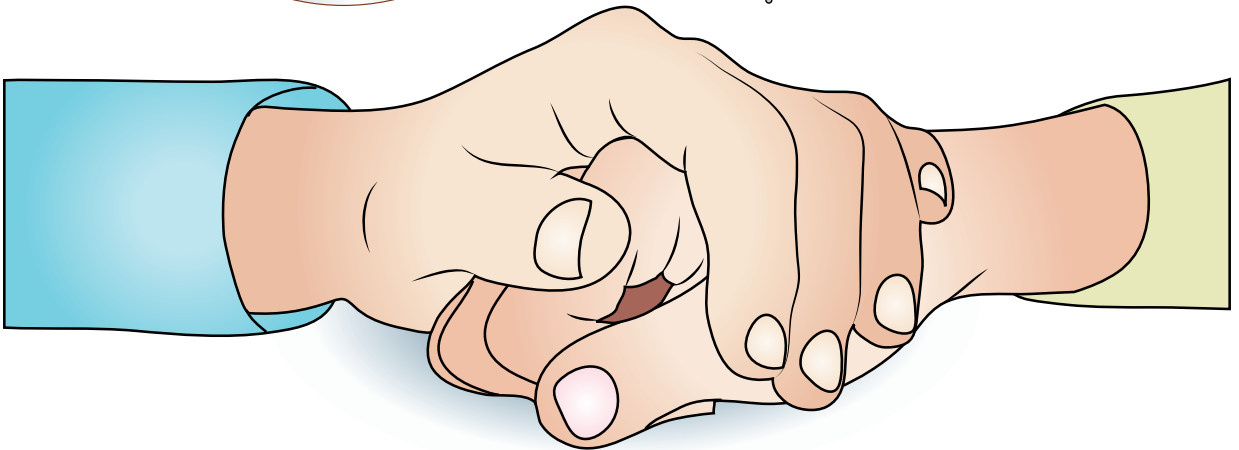
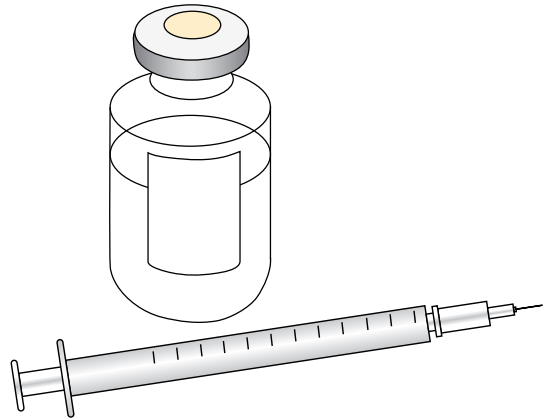
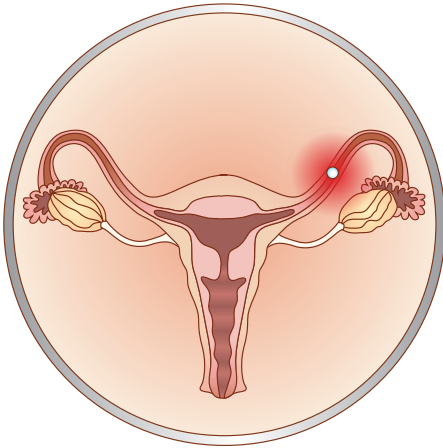


# Methotrexate for Ectopic Pregnancy: What you need to know



Learning about an ectopic pregnancy can be difficult and stressful. We have created this booklet to help you and your family during this challenging time. It explains ectopic pregnancy and methotrexate medication. It also includes some resources that we hope will guide you along the road ahead.

# Acknowledgements

This document was prepared by the staff of the  
Women's Health Ambulatory Clinic.

We would like to thank the MUHC Patient Education Office for their support throughout the development of this document, the writing, design, layout, as well as for the creation of all the images.

© copyright 24 July 2018 McGill University Health Centre. Reproduction in whole or in part without express written permission of [patienteducation@muhc.mcgill.ca](mailto:patienteducation@muhc.mcgill.ca) is prohibited.



## IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ

Information provided by this document is for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a professional healthcare practitioner, or to substitute for medical care. Contact a qualified healthcare practitioner if you have any questions concerning your care.

Centre universitaire  
de santé McGill



McGill University  
Health Centre

**Office d'éducation des patients**  
**Patient Education Office**

This material is also available on the site of the  
**MUHC Patient Education Office**  
[www.muhcpatienteducation.ca](http://www.muhcpatienteducation.ca)

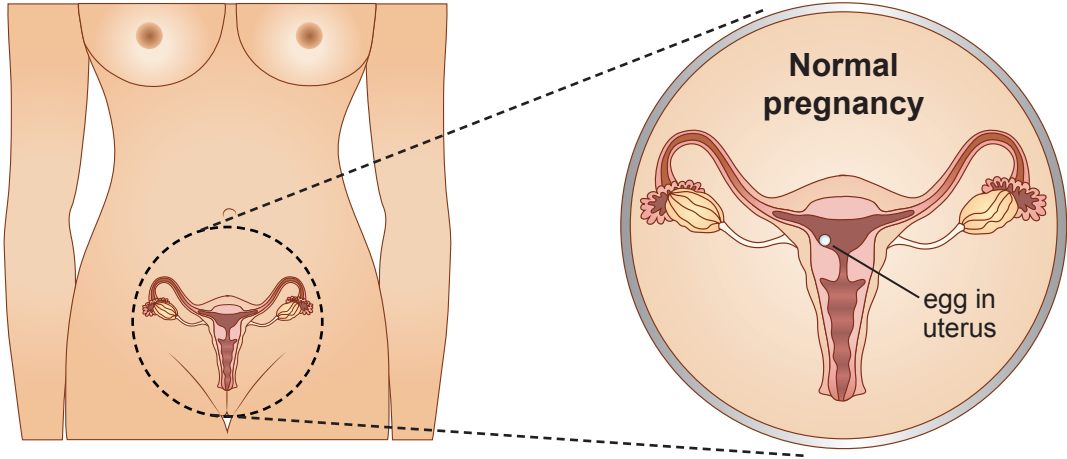


# Table of Contents

What is an ectopic pregnancy?	4
Methotrexate: how it works	5
How it is given	5
Side effects	6
When to go to the Emergency Department	6
Methotrexate Do's and Don'ts	7
Follow-up care after ectopic pregnancy	9
Your feelings	10
Looking for more information?	11
Notes	Back cover
Help us help others	Back cover

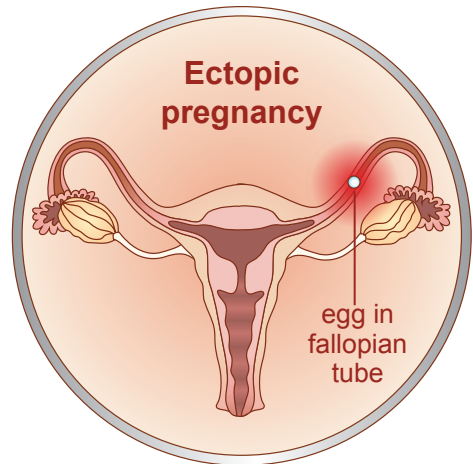
# What is an ectopic pregnancy?

During pregnancy, the fertilized egg (or embryo) grows in the uterus (womb). In order for the egg to grow, the uterus lining grows thicker over time.



In an ectopic pregnancy, the egg grows outside the uterus. Most often, the egg grows in the fallopian tube. This type of ectopic pregnancy is often called a “tubal” pregnancy. An egg growing outside the uterus will not survive.

Each day the egg grows, your fallopian tube will stretch. This can cause pain. If left to continue to grow, your fallopian tube will eventually burst. You will then need an emergency surgery.



The good news is that it is possible to catch an ectopic pregnancy early on. When we do, we will give you a medication called **methotrexate**. This medication will help to end your ectopic pregnancy safely.

# Methotrexate: how it works

Methotrexate is a medication that targets fast-growing cells (such as egg cells). It stops these cells from growing. The cells then die and dissolve.

## How it is given

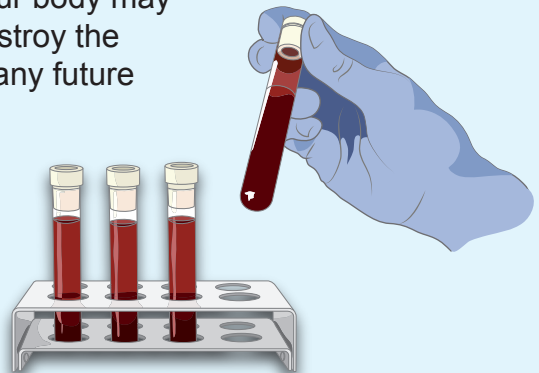
A nurse will give you methotrexate as an injection (or needle) into your buttock muscle.

You will need to have blood tests done once a week after receiving methotrexate. These tests will measure pregnancy hormone levels in your blood. These hormone levels will tell your doctor how well the methotrexate has worked. Depending on these blood test results, some women may need a second dose of the medication.

If your blood type is **Rh negative**, you will also need to take a medication called **Rho(D)**.

### Did you know?

Rh is a type of protein that sits on your red blood cells. A blood test is done to see if you are Rh-positive or Rh-negative. Most people are Rh-positive. If you are Rh-negative your body may respond by producing proteins that destroy the baby's blood cells. To prevent this for any future pregnancy, your doctor will suggest that you take Rho(D). Let us know if you have any questions.



# Side effects

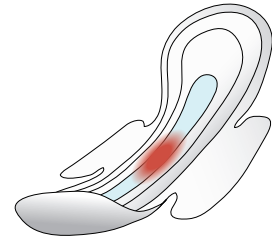
You may notice any of the following changes after you have received methotrexate:



- Mild or “crampy” abdominal or belly pain



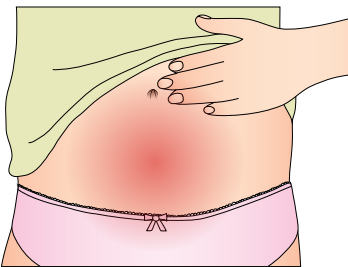
- Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)



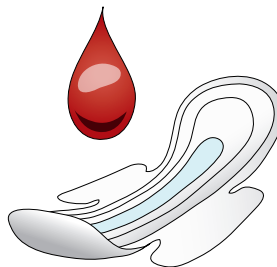
- Light vaginal bleeding (this can last for a few days, up to a few weeks)

# When to go to Emergency

If you notice any of the following changes after you have received methotrexate:



- Strong abdominal or belly pain

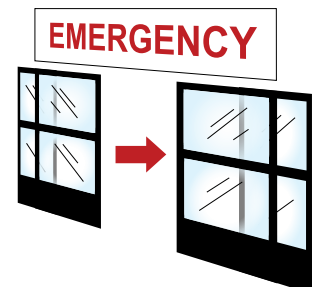


- Heavy bleeding



- Dizziness

Do not wait. These changes are not normal. Go to the Emergency room right away.

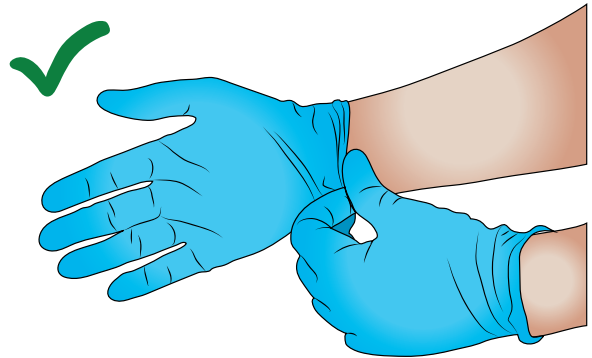
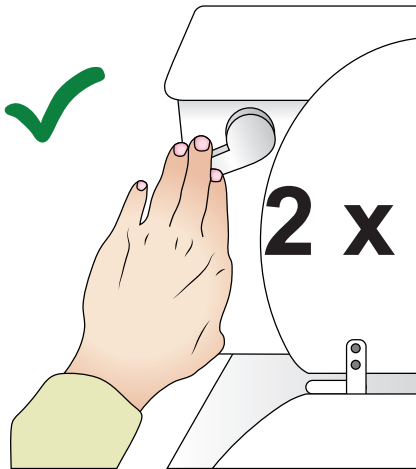


# Methotrexate Do's and Don'ts

## Do's

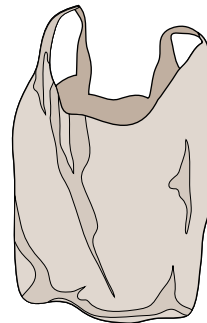
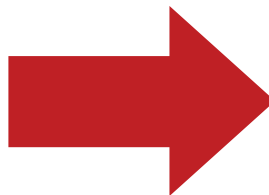
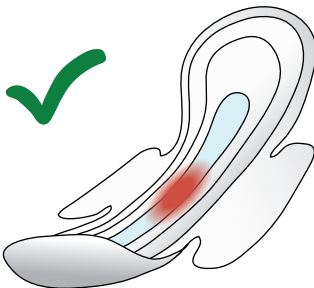
Your body gets rid of methotrexate through your body fluids and waste (that is, blood, urine, stool, and vomit).

To help protect others from being exposed to this medication, for the first 96 hours after you have received methotrexate make sure that:



- You flush the toilet twice to get rid of any body fluids and waste.

- Your family wears gloves to clean any spills of your blood, urine, stool, and vomit.




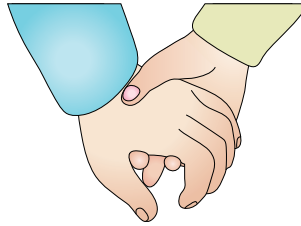
- You throw out any used sanitary pads in a separate plastic bag.


## Don'ts

Once you have received methotrexate, please avoid:




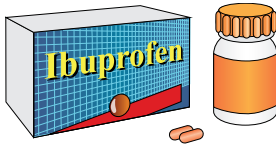
 Vitamins with folic acid.  
(This can stop the methotrexate from working.)




 Sexual intercourse  
for 2 weeks




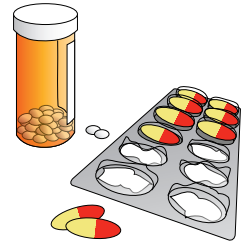
 Getting pregnant in  
the next 3 months




 Any anti-inflammatory  
medications (e.g. ibuprofen,  
like Motrin® or Advil®) unless  
your doctor tells you otherwise.  
(They can interfere with the  
methotrexate.)




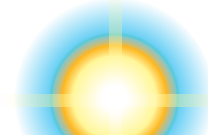
 Alcohol for  
2 weeks




 Sulfa antibiotics, unless  
your doctor tells you  
otherwise. (This can  
stop the methotrexate  
from working.)



 Travelling - before  
speaking to your doctor.



 Direct sun for 2 weeks – if you will be  
in the sun you should use sunscreen.

Aside from these, you may continue to go about your regular day-to-day activities, when you are ready.

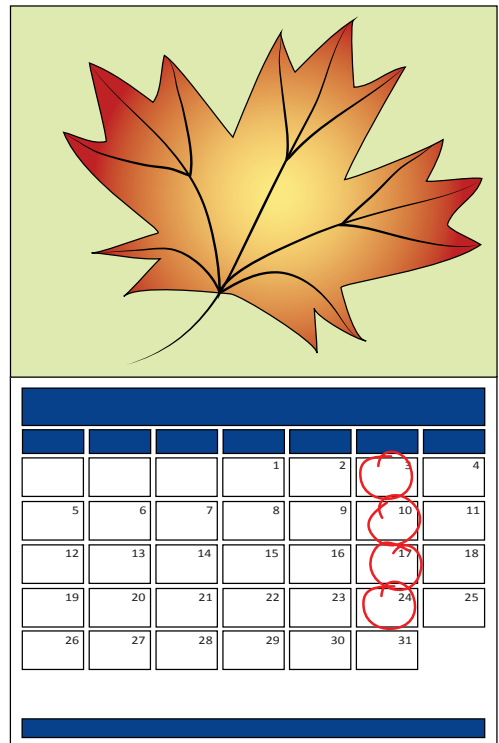


# Follow-up care after ectopic pregnancy

To see if the methotrexate has worked, you will need to return to the clinic to have a blood test 1 week after receiving it.

You will need to repeat this test once a week until we can see that there is no more pregnancy hormone left in your body.

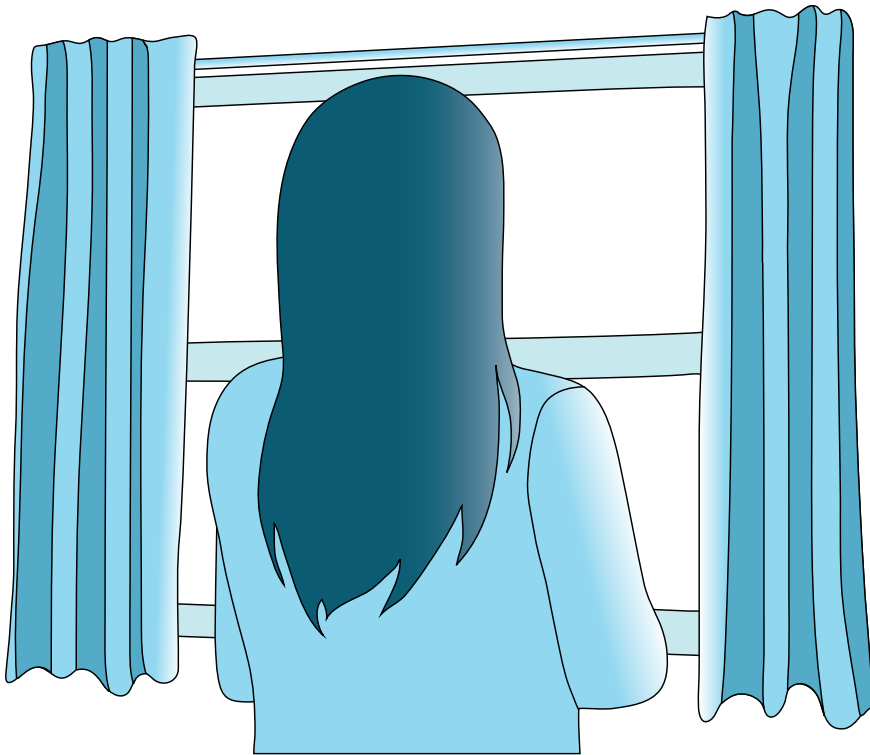
When this happens, we know that the medication has worked. This can take at least 4-6 weeks.



# Your feelings

Your body may get better before you feel your usual self again. For many women, it takes time before they can feel emotionally better and come to terms with what has happened.

Your feelings of grief and loss may be strong. They may also be different from those of your partner. You and your partner may even express your feelings differently.



If either of you is having trouble working through these feelings, contact your nurse or CLSC. We are here to help!

# Looking for more information?

For more information on ectopic pregnancy, visit these websites:

- [www.ectopicpregnancy.org](http://www.ectopicpregnancy.org)
- [www.ectopic.org](http://www.ectopic.org)

The following groups offer support for persons who have had ectopic pregnancies:

- **The Centre for Reproductive Loss**  
Tel.: 514-486-6708
- **Infertility Awareness Association of Canada (IAAC)**  
Tel.: 514-633-4494
- **Your local CLSC**



# Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Help support the MUHC Patient Education Office! Donations make a huge difference. Call the Montreal General Hospital Foundation to donate: 514-934-8230.

A check from the Bank of Montreal. The date is 2014/01/01. The amount is \$100.00. The payee is Montreal General Hospital Foundation. The memo is MUHC Patient Education. The check is signed by M.C. Scofield. The MICR line at the bottom is ⑆001⑆ 12345⑆001⑆ 123⑆456⑆7⑆. There is a small logo of a red figure in the bottom right corner of the check area.

M.C. SCOFIELD  
12 Main Street West  
Montreal, Quebec

DATE 2014/01/01


PAY TO THE ORDER OF: Montreal General Hospital Foundation

BANK OF MONTREAL

MEMO MUHC Patient Education

⑆001⑆ 12345⑆001⑆ 123⑆456⑆7⑆

100 DOLLARS



Montreal General Hospital Foundation  
1650 Cedar Avenue, room E6-129  
Montreal QC, H3G 1A4