

Methotrexate Therapy

for the Treatment of Ectopic Pregnancy

How Does Methotrexate Treat Ectopic Pregnancy?

An ectopic pregnancy, also known as tubal pregnancy, occurs when a fertilized egg implants outside the uterus. Methotrexate inhibits growing cells, such as those found in an ectopic pregnancy. This effect is temporary but typically sufficient to stop the growth of the ectopic pregnancy, which is then reabsorbed by the body. All other normal, healthy cells typically recover rapidly and return to normal within five to 10 days.

What Are the Side Effects of Treatment?

Some women who receive methotrexate treatment for ectopic pregnancy may experience:

- Flu-like symptoms for two to three days after treatment
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue or dizziness
- Mild nausea, abdominal cramps, and diarrhea
- Less common symptoms include skin rashes, vomiting, mouth sores, and fever

Symptoms are temporary and usually resolve within three to seven days.

Is Methotrexate Always Successful in Treatment of Ectopic Pregnancy?

- Methotrexate therapy is highly successful for the treatment of ectopic pregnancy.
- A second course of medication may be needed.
- Rarely, surgery may be required to treat an ectopic pregnancy.

What Can I Do to Support My Recovery?

- **Do not take ibuprofen, aspirin or related pain relievers** for several days after methotrexate use, as these medications can increase the risk of side effects.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Avoid pregnancy for three months following methotrexate therapy. A birth control method is recommended during this time.
- Drink large amounts of fluids, such as water or juice, for two days after your injection.
- Refrain from sexual intercourse and vigorous physical activity until your provider confirms the ectopic pregnancy has resolved.
- Avoid sulfonamide medications, such as Bactrim, Septra, Silvadene, Pediazole, and certain antibiotics.
- Avoid vitamins containing vitamin B or folic acid.
- Avoid sun exposure.

Call Southcentral Foundation Obstetrics and Gynecology at 907-729-3100 if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Persistent or severe pain in your abdomen or pelvis.
- Heavy vaginal bleeding equal to soaking through a pad or a super tampon every hour for two or more hours in a row.
- Feeling feverish, a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, chills, or persistence nausea and vomiting.

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department if your condition worsens or the clinic is closed.

Your birth control preference is:

The methotrexate dosage is calculated based on your HCG levels and may vary. Returning for all follow-up blood tests and visits is essential, as missed appointments can delay detection of complications and become life-threatening.

Lab draw timing is critical, please attend all scheduled appointments at SCF OB-GYN:

Day 1: is the day of your methotrexate treatment.

Day 4: HCG blood draw:

Day 7: HCG blood draw:

Provider follow-up visit:

HCG levels will be drawn weekly until they reach undetectable levels.

Obstetrics and Gynecology
K'kuyaqqa Niltu, 3rd floor
4441 Diplomacy Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508

Phone
907-729-3100
Hours
8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Monday-Friday



The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Southcentral Foundation jointly own and manage the Alaska Native Medical Center under the terms of Public Law 105-83. These parent organizations have established a Joint Operating Board to ensure unified operation of health services provided by the Medical Center.

