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## **Methotrexate Administration for Ectopic Pregnancy**

### **What is an ectopic pregnancy?**

This is a pregnancy that is located in the wrong place in the woman's body, outside of the uterus. Most ectopic pregnancies occur in the fallopian tubes (the tubes that connect the ovaries to the uterus) and more rarely the embryo can attach to the cervix, ovary, or inside the abdomen. The embryo can grow bigger, but it cannot grow into a baby in these situations. As the embryo grows rapidly, it can cause pain and bleeding and lead to other complications such as rupture of the fallopian tube. If the pregnancy is caught early enough, a medication can be given instead of having surgery to remove this dangerous pregnancy. This medicine is called Methotrexate.

### **What is Methotrexate? How does it work?**

Methotrexate has been used for many years to treat some forms of cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, and psoriasis. Now it is approved for treatment of ectopic pregnancies. Methotrexate targets cells that grow rapidly and the embryo is one of the fastest growing group of cells in the body. The Methotrexate stops the cells from growing and the cells will then die off and dissolve.

### **How is Methotrexate given?**

It is given as an injection into the muscle in your buttocks. The dose is calculated based on your height and weight. At times, the dose needs to be repeated and this decision is based off of your blood work we follow after the injection is given.

### **What are the common side effects of Methotrexate?**

About 2-7 days after you get the Methotrexate, you will probably experience pain in your stomach. The pain is often crampy and may last up to 12 hours. You may also have vaginal bleeding that may last for a few days to a few weeks. The bleeding is often light or like a period. You may have some nausea, get mouth sores, or sunburn easily for a few days after getting Methotrexate. Another side effect can be a low blood count, but this is less common with the low dose of medication.

### **What are the "Do's and Do not's" after getting Methotrexate?**

You may do most of your normal activities. You should not exercise or do heavy physical work. You should not have vaginal intercourse or put anything into your vagina, including tampons or douches. Also, do not take vitamins containing folic acid because folic acid can prevent the Methotrexate from working. Call the nurse triage line or go to the emergency room if you have severe pain, heavy vaginal bleeding, or other problems that worry you.

You will need blood work to follow your pregnancy hormone level which will be checked on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> day after getting your injection. These dates are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. This is **very important** and is the primary way your provider knows that the Methotrexate has worked.

Feel free to call Maitri with any questions or concerns you have. We hope you have a speedy recovery.