**Why safety at home is important**

Methotrexate can stay in your body for up to a week. When it is in your body, it can also be in your body fluids. For example, it can be in your urine and faeces when you go to the toilet, in your vomit if you are sick, and in other bodily fluids such as blood.

Methotrexate can affect other people who come into contact with it. In hospital, nurses wear gloves and special clothing to protect them from this medicine. At home, the risk is much smaller, but you still need to be careful.

It is important that you know how to clean up body fluids safely.

**What are the best safety precautions?**

- Wear gloves to clean up body fluids (such as urine, faeces, vomit, blood). Always wash your hands afterwards.
- Cleaning up spills of body fluid:
  - Use disposable cloths
  - Wash down any surfaces with soapy water
  - Put the used cloths in a plastic bag and tie it up
  - Put this bag inside another plastic bag and tie that up
  - Throw the bags in the bin (normal household waste)
- Washing clothing or bedding with body fluids on:
  - Wash it straight away
  - Wash them separately on a long washing machine cycle and line dry
  - Do NOT send for dry cleaning
- Vomiting:
  - Use a plastic bowl, or a plastic bag with no holes
  - Empty the bowl into the toilet or a bag and dispose of the bag as described earlier
- Going to the toilet:
  - Close the lid afterwards
  - Flush using a full flush

**Common Questions**

**Can I hug, kiss and touch my family?**
- Yes, it is safe to touch other people, kiss and to hug and cuddle your family

**What gloves should I use to clean up body fluids?**
- You can use disposable gloves or washing up gloves

**Further information and bereavement support are available from:**

- SANDS - Miscarriage, stillbirth & newborn death support:
  - 24/7 Bereavement support line 1300 072 637 or [https://www.sands.org.au/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIjZnawNn79AIvmiOrCh2WaAeEAAYASAAEgIvJPD_BwE](https://www.sands.org.au/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIjZnawNn79AIvmiOrCh2WaAeEAAYASAAEgIvJPD_BwE)
What is an ectopic pregnancy?
An ectopic pregnancy is when a fertilised egg attaches and starts to grow outside of the uterus (womb). Most ectopic pregnancies (9 out of 10) occur in a fallopian tube. The pregnancy can also grow in other areas such as in your cervix, caesarean scar, ovary, or abdomen, but this is not very common. About one in every 100 pregnancies is an ectopic pregnancy. Early diagnosis and treatment is important to prevent life-threatening bleeding and if possible, so the tube can be saved, and can continue to work. At first, an ectopic pregnancy may feel like a normal pregnancy with the usual pregnancy symptoms. You may experience pain and/or vaginal bleeding.

Methotrexate Treatment
Methotrexate is a medical treatment for ectopic pregnancy and is an alternative to surgery. Methotrexate (used in much higher doses) is a commonly used chemotherapy medication for cancer treatment but is also used for rheumatoid arthritis and other medical conditions.

How is treatment given?
Methotrexate is given as an injection into a large muscle (usually thigh or buttock) and you can usually go home shortly afterwards. There is a small chance that you may need a repeat dose of methotrexate. Your doctor will advise you if this is required. Follow-up blood tests are required. You doctor will advise you of these requirements.

Side Effects
Some possible side effects of this medication include vaginal bleeding, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramping, altered bowel habits, mouth ulcers, skin rashes, indigestion, tiredness, light headedness, or dizziness. These effects usually settle within a few days without treatment. More severe reactions are uncommon.
With one dose of methotrexate, you may not experience any side effects, however, you may if you require more than one dose.

After receiving a dose of Methotrexate
For the next week:
- Do not drink alcohol
- Do not take folic acid/folate and folic acid containing supplements
- Do not spend long periods of time in the sun
- Do not take anti-inflammatory medicines such as aspirin, Nurofen (ibuprofen) and Voltaren (diclofenac), (Panadol) paracetamol is safe to take if required
- Drink plenty of water – 2 to 3 litres per day
- It is important to not have sex during your treatment.
  - Talk with your doctor about when sexual activity is safe again. If your doctor tells you it is safe to have sex within seven days of having methotrexate, use a condom to protect your partner from your body fluids.

Follow up:
Close follow up through our Pregnancy assessment clinic is recommended until the pregnancy hormone (BhCG) has returned to zero.
D1 = treatment day
D4 = blood test for BhCG level
D7 = Blood test for BhCG level and review in the clinic, if the level has not dropped sufficiently, then a further dose of methotrexate may be indicated.
Then, weekly BhCG until the level is zero.

It is important to delay the next pregnancy for four months after having methotrexate because of the possible effects on the developing baby. Contraception is recommended during this time. Your doctor can advise you about the different contraceptive options available and when it is safe to fall pregnant again after your treatment.

In the event of severe abdominal pain, heavy bleeding, fainting, shoulder pain, fever or if you have any other major concerns, PLEASE GO TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY.