

PATIENT INFORMATION

Pelvic Pain and Ovarian Cysts

The pelvis is the lower part of the abdomen and contains the bladder, bowel, ovaries and uterus (womb). There are many potential causes of pelvic pain, but this leaflet focuses on ovarian cysts.

Ovulation Pain

Ovulation is part of the menstrual cycle. It occurs around half-way through your cycle, when an egg is released from one of the ovaries. Some women experience a sharp pain when the egg is released which usually only lasts a few hours but can be very uncomfortable. This pain usually resolves with simple painkillers and requires no further treatment.

Ovarian Cysts

There are many different types of ovarian cysts, but most are benign (non-cancerous) and require no treatment. They are very common in premenopausal women (people who have not gone through the menopause yet), and most cysts form during ovulation. A small amount of fluid or blood collects in a sac on the ovary during release of an egg. This sac may break open causing the fluid to leak into the abdomen, called a cyst rupture or cyst accident. This is extremely irritant and can cause severe abdominal pain similar to appendicitis.

If you attend hospital with this type of pain, we will perform some routine blood tests which can help us determine the cause. If the results are normal or borderline, we can arrange an ultrasound scan to look at the ovaries in more detail. The probe of the scanner is placed on your abdomen to scan the ovaries. A small probe is also often placed inside your vagina to obtain more detailed images. If a cyst is diagnosed, most commonly it requires no treatment and resolves on its own. We may still ask the gynaecology team to see you, and they may recommend another scan in a few months' time to check it is getting better.

Pain caused by a cyst accident usually gets better within 1-2 weeks with simple painkillers such as paracetamol.

If you are post-menopausal, whilst most cysts are benign and resolve on their own, it is important that you are referred to the gynaecology team who will decide if you need further investigation or treatment.

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.