

# Blighted Ovum

## “Anembryonic Pregnancy”

### What is a blighted ovum?

A blighted ovum is a form of miscarriage which occurs in early pregnancy. This occurs when the fertilised egg implants into the uterus, the placenta and sac start to grow but an embryo (baby) does not develop. On an ultrasound examination, this will generally look like an empty pregnancy sac. Even though there is no embryo, the placenta can still produce the pregnancy hormone hCG and so you may experience all the typical symptoms of pregnancy such as sore breasts and morning sickness.

### How do I know if I have a blighted ovum?

A blighted ovum is usually diagnosed with an ultrasound. You may be told you have an empty pregnancy sac, with no developing embryo. Sometimes, if the pregnancy is still very early, you may be recommended to have a second scan at a later date before a blighted ovum can be diagnosed.

Sometimes, you may experience signs and symptoms relating to the blighted ovum. These generally include bleeding from the vagina and lower abdominal cramping.

### Why does this happen?

The exact cause of a blighted ovum is sometimes unknown, but it is most commonly thought to be caused by chromosomal abnormalities that occur in the fertilized egg.

A blighted ovum generally occurs by random chance. If you experience a blighted ovum, this does not put you at a higher risk of this occurring again. Most women who have a blighted ovum go on to have successful pregnancies in the future.

### Treatment

There are a few options available to treat a blighted ovum. The midwife and doctor will discuss which options may be best for you. Some of your options may include

- “Wait and See” if the pregnancy passes naturally on its own
- Taking a medication called misoprostol.
- Having a surgical procedure called a suction D&C (dilatation and curettage) to remove the pregnancy tissue.

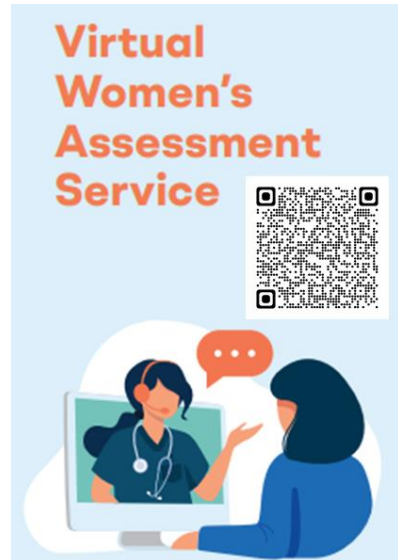


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## Who can I contact for help?

- Your local / regular GP
- Your nearest emergency department
- **Women’s Assessment Service** at the Women’s and Children’s Hospital  
**Ph: (08) 8161 7530** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- **Virtual Women’s Assessment Service** by the Women’s and Children’s Hospital (8am – 4pm, 7 days a week)  
Access via the website: [www.wch.sa.gov.au](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au), or the QR code



## Who can I contact for support?

- **SANDS** (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support Australia)  
Ph: 1300 308 307 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- **The Pink Elephants Support Network**  
Web: [www.pinkelephants.org.au](http://www.pinkelephants.org.au)
- **Lifeline:**  
Lifeline provides 24-hour access to crisis support services.  
Ph: 13 11 14 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)  
Web: [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)
- **Miscarriage Australia:**  
Web: [miscarriageaustralia.com.au](http://miscarriageaustralia.com.au)

We recognise that the ending of a wanted pregnancy is upsetting for both you and your family. For many, emotional healing will take time. We encourage you to talk about your feelings with your family, friends, support networks, your GP or the midwives and doctors at the hospital.

### For more information

**Women’s Assessment Service**  
**Women’s & Children’s Hospital**  
**Ground floor – Queen Victoria Building**  
**72 King William Road, North Adelaide, SA 5006**  
**Telephone: 08 8161 7530**

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Women's and Children's  
Health Network



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