



This document is a resource for health care providers and patients and synthesizes content from the [Early Pregnancy Complications and Loss quality standard](#).

## Presentation of Early Pregnancy Complications (Such as Pain and/or Vaginal Bleeding)



### Quality Statement (QS)\* 7: Compassionate Care

- Treat all patients and families with dignity and respect and provide compassionate care and information that is supportive of physical and emotional needs
- Share all clinical information with the person, how they can access care, and what to expect physically and emotionally during complications and/or loss in early pregnancy

- PAIL Network provides [educational opportunities and resources](#) for health care and service professionals

\*The quality statements are provided in full on page 2.

## Assessment and Diagnosis



### QS 1: Comprehensive Assessment

- Complete a comprehensive assessment that includes a history-taking, transvaginal ultrasound, and serum beta-hCG measurement.



### QS 2: Early Pregnancy Assessment Services

- Be aware of early pregnancy assessment services available in your region. These are health care services that are offered outside of the emergency department, with continuity of care and timely follow-up.
- Refer people to existing services, and ensure that relevant health information is shared with other care providers, patients, and families



### QS 3: Pregnancy of Unknown Location

- A temporary state until a final diagnosis of intrauterine pregnancy, ectopic pregnancy, or miscarriage can be made
- Repeat ultrasounds and serum beta-hCG testing until pregnancy is located or the beta-hCG level returns to zero



### QS 4: Diagnosis of Intrauterine Early Pregnancy Loss

- Early pregnancy loss can be diagnosed when ultrasound confirms either:
  - No embryo and an intrauterine gestational sac of at least 25 mm mean diameter; or
  - Embryonic demise—an intrauterine gestational sac, an embryonic crown-rump length of at least 7 mm, and no fetal cardiac activity
- Provide diagnoses of early pregnancy loss as soon as possible, as well as information on whom to contact, where to go for follow-up, and how people should expect to hear results
- Communicate a diagnosis of early pregnancy loss to the person's primary or other relevant care providers

## Management



### QS 5: Management Options for Intrauterine Early Pregnancy Loss

- Engage in shared-decision making with the person and their family in choosing a management option that is right for them
- Provide information on all management options and the possible benefits and harms of each approach:
  - **Expectant management**—a “watchful waiting” approach. The goal is for the products of conception to expel from the uterus without intervention
  - **Medical management**—use of medications (e.g., misoprostol, mifepristone) to dilate cervix and assist with expulsion of the products of conception
  - **Surgical management**—vacuum uterine aspiration or dilatation and curettage to surgically remove the products of conception



### QS 6: Management Options for Tubal Ectopic Pregnancy

- Transvaginal ultrasound is the recommended diagnostic tool for ectopic pregnancy and serial beta-hCG measurements should be followed until they return to zero
- Provide information on all management options and the possible benefits and harms of each approach:
  - **Expectant management**—an option for those who are clinically stable, with an ultrasound diagnosis of tubal ectopic pregnancy and a decreasing beta-hCG level initially < 1,500 mIU/mL. Close follow-up and awareness of any changes in signs or symptoms are essential
  - **Medical management**—a single intramuscular dose of methotrexate, 50 mg/m<sup>2</sup>, to end the pregnancy
  - **Surgical management**—a laparoscopic approach is recommended

## Follow-Up



### QS 8: Psychosocial and Peer Supports

- Offer information on psychosocial and peer support services and organizations (see Resources on page 2)

- PAIL Network offers free individual and group [support services](#) and [peer support](#) programs for families across Ontario

## **Quality Statement 1: Comprehensive Assessment**

People with signs or symptoms of early pregnancy complications receive a comprehensive assessment that includes a transvaginal ultrasound and serum beta-hCG measurement.

## **Quality Statement 2: Early Pregnancy Assessment Services**

People experiencing early pregnancy complications and loss have access to early pregnancy assessment services.

## **Quality Statement 3: Pregnancy of Unknown Location**

People with a pregnancy of unknown location (not visible in the uterus or adnexa, on ultrasound) receive two serial serum beta-hCG measurements taken 48 hours apart. They are followed until a final diagnosis is made or until beta-hCG returns to zero.

## **Quality Statement 4: Diagnosis of Intrauterine Early Pregnancy Loss**

Pregnant people who experience intrauterine early pregnancy loss receive this diagnosis as quickly as possible based on transvaginal ultrasound. While waiting to learn whether or not the pregnancy is viable, they receive information on who to contact, where to go, and how long it should take to receive a diagnosis. A diagnosis of early pregnancy loss is also communicated to the person's primary or other relevant care providers.

## **Quality Statement 5: Management Options for Intrauterine Early Pregnancy Loss**

People with intrauterine early pregnancy loss receive information on all potential management options (expectant, medical, and surgical) and are supported in making an informed decision on the most appropriate management approach for them, based on their diagnosis, clinical situation, values, and preferences.

## **Quality Statement 6: Management Options for Tubal Ectopic Pregnancy**

People with a confirmed tubal ectopic pregnancy receive information on all potential management options (expectant, medical, and surgical) and are supported to make an informed decision about their care. They have access to their preferred management option. Health care professionals closely monitor signs and symptoms and arrange appropriate access to follow-up care.

## **Quality Statement 7: Compassionate Care**

People and families experiencing early pregnancy complications and/or loss are treated with dignity and respect, and receive support in a sensitive manner, taking into account their individual circumstances and emotional responses, no matter where they receive their care.

## **Quality Statement 8: Psychosocial and Peer Supports**

People who experience an early pregnancy loss and their families are offered information about psychosocial and peer support services and organizations.

Note: This resource can be used to support health care professionals in the provision of care. It does not override the responsibility of health care professionals to make decisions with patients, after considering each patient's unique circumstances. Grouping/directionality of statements may not be applicable for every patient, and clinical judgment should be used.

## Resources

- [Early Pregnancy Complications and Loss quality standard](https://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/documents/evidence/quality-standards/qs-early-pregnancy-complications-and-loss-quality-standard-en.pdf)  
<https://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/documents/evidence/quality-standards/qs-early-pregnancy-complications-and-loss-quality-standard-en.pdf>
- [Early Pregnancy Complications and Loss patient guide](https://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/documents/evidence/quality-standards/qs-early-pregnancy-complications-and-loss-patient-guide-en.pdf)  
<https://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/documents/evidence/quality-standards/qs-early-pregnancy-complications-and-loss-patient-guide-en.pdf>
- [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence – Pathways for Ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage overview](https://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/ectopic-pregnancy-and-miscarriage#path=view%3A/pathways/ectopic-pregnancy-and-miscarriage/ectopic-pregnancy-and-miscarriage-overview.xml&content=view-index)  
<https://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/ectopic-pregnancy-and-miscarriage#path=view%3A/pathways/ectopic-pregnancy-and-miscarriage/ectopic-pregnancy-and-miscarriage-overview.xml&content=view-index>
- [Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network](https://pailnetwork.sunnybrook.ca) <https://pailnetwork.sunnybrook.ca>
- [Communicating with Families Experiencing a Pregnancy Loss](https://www.pcmch.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/PCMCH-Early-Pregnancy-Loss-D-Communicating-with-Families-Experiencing-a-Pregnancy-Loss_Updated.pdf)  
[https://www.pcmch.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/PCMCH-Early-Pregnancy-Loss-D-Communicating-with-Families-Experiencing-a-Pregnancy-Loss\\_Updated.pdf](https://www.pcmch.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/PCMCH-Early-Pregnancy-Loss-D-Communicating-with-Families-Experiencing-a-Pregnancy-Loss_Updated.pdf)
- [October 15—Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day](https://www.ontario.ca/page/october-15-pregnancy-and-infant-loss-awareness-day) [october15.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/page/october-15-pregnancy-and-infant-loss-awareness-day)

Additional tools and resources are on [Quorum](https://quorum.hqontario.ca/en/Home/Posts/Early-Pregnancy-Complications-and-Loss-Quality-Standard-Tools-for-Implementation) <https://quorum.hqontario.ca/en/Home/Posts/Early-Pregnancy-Complications-and-Loss-Quality-Standard-Tools-for-Implementation>