

Unscheduled Bleeding Whilst Taking Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

What is 'unscheduled bleeding'?

Hormone replacement therapy can cause irregular vaginal bleeding when it is first started. Unscheduled bleeding is vaginal bleeding that occurs after 6 months of being on HRT that is not linked to your period.

What causes unscheduled bleeding?

There can be several causes for this bleeding. It can be due to missing pills, patches or applications, your body not absorbing the hormones efficiently or being on the wrong form of HRT for you. It can also be caused by a thinned vaginal skin (called atrophic vaginitis), polyps in the womb or on the cervix (neck of the womb), or other abnormalities of the cervix or within the womb itself.

In some instances, bleeding can be due to cancer of the cervix or womb, but this is the case in only about 1 in 80 women who continue to have irregular bleeding after taking their HRT regularly for 6 months or more.

Why have I been referred?

Your Primary Care Clinician (e.g., GP or other health professional) has decided with you that you needed a scan to help identify or rule out possible causes of your bleeding.

What happens next?

If the scan is normal, we will confirm this on the day, and you will be asked to book a review appointment with your GP to discuss possible changes to your HRT prescription.

You will be told if your scan shows something that requires further investigation. The Sonographer will not be able to give you a diagnosis during your appointment. They will organise for your information to be reviewed by the Urgent Suspected Cancer Team and you will receive a further appointment to discuss the next tests required to diagnose the cause for your bleeding.

Your GP will be sent a copy of the scan report in both cases.

What if my symptoms worsen?

Please contact your GP surgery if your bleeding becomes heavier or more frequent.

What if I have not heard anything after being referred for further investigations at Liverpool Women's Hospital?

You should be contacted within a few working days with details about your follow up appointment. If you need further advice or information while you are waiting for your tests and results you can contact the Early Diagnosis Support Worker:

Lyndsey McIntyre: 0151 702 4131

This leaflet can be formally translated on request via our Patient Experience Team, although response times to have information translated can vary. To request formal translation services or if you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust
Crown Street
Liverpool
L8 7SS

Tel: 0151 708 9988

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