Heavy bleeding, faintness, and possible pregnancy: get emergency care now

You asked: I’m soaking a pad every hour, feel faint, and might be pregnant. Can I wait until next week?
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No—do not wait until next week. Call your local emergency number now, or have someone call for you. Soaking a pad about every hour and feeling faint can mean heavy blood loss or another pregnancy-related emergency. Pregnancy bleeding is not always serious, but heavy bleeding with dizziness or fainting needs immediate treatment. [1]

Do not drive yourself. If an ambulance is available, call for one. Otherwise, have another adult take you to the nearest emergency department now. Sit or lie down while you wait, and have someone stay with you if possible. Tell the dispatcher or staff: “I may be pregnant, I am soaking a pad every hour, and I feel faint.”

Call emergency services immediately, rather than arranging your own ride, if you pass out, cannot stay awake, become confused, have chest pain or trouble breathing, or the bleeding becomes heavier. Severe or one-sided belly pain, shoulder-tip pain, and faintness can also be signs of a serious ectopic pregnancy complication. [2]

Emergency signs of bleeding in pregnancy
A doctor explains warning signs and risks of vaginal bleeding during pregnancy.
Video · https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9udQN8VeJRA

While help is on the way

- Use pads, not tampons or menstrual cups, so you can track the bleeding.
- If easy to do without delaying departure, note when bleeding began, how many pads you have soaked, and whether you have passed clots or tissue.
- Bring or tell staff the date of your last period, any pregnancy-test result, medicines you take, allergies, and major health conditions.
- Do not eat or drink a large amount in case urgent tests or treatment are needed. Do not delay care to gather these details.

At the emergency department, clinicians may check your blood pressure and pulse, do a pregnancy test and blood tests, and may use an ultrasound to find the cause of the bleeding. [3]



Emergency staff can assess heavy bleeding and faintness as soon as you arrive. · Image source: The Vital Role of Emergency Medicine Nurses in Patient Care

Even if the bleeding slows or you feel somewhat better, **you still need urgent assessment today.** Heavy bleeding and feeling faint are emergency warning signs in a possible pregnancy. [4]

Sources

1. NHS https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/common-symptoms/vaginal-bleeding/
2. NHS https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ectopic-pregnancy/symptoms/
3. University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire https://www.uhcw.nhs.uk/download/clientfiles/files/pi-bleeding-and-or-pain-in-early-pregnancy.pdf
4. London Ambulance Service https://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/our-services/emergency-care/emergency-care-advice/advice-if-you-are-due-to-give-birth/