

Medical management of your miscarriage



We are very sorry you have had a miscarriage. We hope this information is useful for you. It explains what will happen now that you have decided on medical management of your miscarriage.

How do the tablets work?

The misoprostol makes your uterus (womb) contract and miscarry the pregnancy tissue over the following few hours. Please follow the instructions on the box. You need to place 4 tablets of misoprostol (800mcg) high up inside of your vagina.

Will it hurt?

You will experience period-like cramps, which can be strong. This usually settles quickly once the miscarriage has completed. You should take the painkillers given to you in EGU (paracetamol or co-codamol and ibuprofen if you are not sensitive to them) at the same time as the misoprostol to help reduce the pain.

Are there any other side effects?

Most people tolerate the tablets very well, but you may experience sickness and diarrhoea and shivering or flushing. Occasionally you may feel dizzy or suffer with a rash.

How long does it take?

The pain and bleeding usually starts within a few hours of having the tablets. They may last for a few hours, but it is variable.

How do I know it's happened?

When the bleeding gets heavier and you pass clots and pregnancy tissue (this can look like liver) this is likely to be the miscarriage. Please be aware you may see some pregnancy tissue. Once the pains and bleeding settle down, it is likely that the miscarriage has happened. You can sit on the toilet to pass the tissue, but if you would like us to examine the pregnancy tissue and send it off to the laboratory for inspection, you will need to collect it and bring it into the hospital. This is your choice.

What happens to the pregnancy tissue if I bring it in for inspection?

Any pregnancy tissue will be sent to the laboratory for inspection. We take the utmost care to treat the tissue with respect and dignity. With your written consent, the pregnancy tissue will then be taken to Penmount crematorium for group cremation with other pregnancy tissue. If you would like to consider a more personal option such as burial, please discuss this with the hospital staff. The hospital chaplain regularly gives a non-denominational blessing in the chapel on behalf of all those who have suffered a miscarriage. We may keep a tiny bit of tissue about the size of a 50p coin in wax, on a slide, as part of your medical record.

What if it doesn't work?

For about one in ten women the tablets don't work straight away. If you don't have any pain or bleeding or if the pregnancy doesn't come away, you will be given the option of having the tablets again or a procedure to empty your uterus (womb).

What follow up is there?

A nurse from the EGU will call you the day after you've taken the misoprostol tablets. If there is any doubt that the miscarriage has happened, we will offer you another scan to check. If you need to speak to someone sooner, please call the numbers below.

Why have I been given a pregnancy test to do at home when the bleeding stops?

A negative pregnancy test confirms that the miscarriage has completed. If the test is still positive three to four weeks following the miscarriage, please contact the emergency gynaecology unit for advice.

How long does the bleeding last?

The bleeding may continue for up to three weeks. It should get lighter, like the end of a period. Do not use tampons for the bleeding, just sanitary pads. It is normal to experience some tummy cramps and even some small clots after the miscarriage, but if:

- the bleeding becomes very heavy
- the pain becomes very severe, or
- you have an unpleasant smelling discharge

see your GP as you may need antibiotics.

When can I resume normal activities?

Having a bath or shower after the miscarriage is safe, but avoid swimming until after the bleeding has stopped. Avoid intercourse for at least a week after the bleeding has stopped. Physically, you should be fine to return to work a few days after the miscarriage, but many women feel very sad after a miscarriage and need a little extra time off to recover. In this case, you'd need to see your GP to arrange a sick note.

When will I get my period again?

Your periods should return within 4-6 weeks, but this does vary.

When can I try again?

There is no 'right' time to start trying again, but we would advise waiting until your next normal period before trying for a baby again and until you both feel ready.

Will it happen again?

The chances of a successful pregnancy next time are very high. Stopping smoking and reducing your alcohol intake both increase your chances of having a healthy pregnancy. If you are trying to conceive you should take folic acid to reduce the risk of neural tube defects such as spina bifida.

Contact us

If you have non-urgent questions

Please contact the Emergency Gynaecology Unit (EGU) on:
01872 252686

If you require urgent assistance, please contact:

The Gynaecology Ward

01872 253163

Further information and support is available from:

The Miscarriage Association

Tel: 01924 200799

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

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If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version
or in another language, please contact the General Office on
01872 252690

