

Probable miscarriage



Who this leaflet is for?

This leaflet is for women who have been told that they have probably already had a miscarriage.

We are sorry that we have been unable to reassure you today. We hope that this information is of some help at this difficult time.

Why do you think I've already had a miscarriage?

With the history you've given and the findings on your ultrasound scan, we feel it is most likely that your pregnancy has come away within the bleeding you've already had.

Why couldn't you see anything on the scan?

This is most likely because you've already passed the pregnancy tissue with the bleeding you've had. However, very occasionally there may be heavy bleeding with an ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy located outside the womb) and this can look very similar on the ultrasound scan.

How will I know for sure?

We have taken a blood test to measure your bHCG (pregnancy hormone) levels. We may need to repeat this in a few days to make sure the hormone level is coming down.

How will I get my results?

We will phone you later today with the results and then advise you whether you need another blood test, and if so, when.

Will I need to do another pregnancy test?

Once we're sure this is a miscarriage, we will ask you to do a urine pregnancy test (instructions attached to it) 10 days after the bleeding has stopped. If this is still positive, please phone the Early Pregnancy clinic.

Should I take any precautions?

Until the final diagnosis is made, we advise you not to travel outside of the county and to avoid strenuous exercise or sexual intercourse.

What if I get pain or bleeding?

If you develop severe pain or heavy bleeding, contact the ward immediately. If you have some mild pain or bleeding and just want advice, ring the Early Pregnancy unit during the day.

How long will the bleeding last?

Following a miscarriage, bleeding may continue for up to three weeks. It should get lighter, like the end of a period. You can use sanitary pads or tampons. If the bleeding becomes heavy or if you have an unpleasant smelling discharge, please call us or see your family doctor as you may need antibiotics for an infection.

When should I seek help?

If you feel faint or dizzy with the bleeding or have severe pain, phone the ward. If the matter is not urgent but you would like some advice, phone the Early Pregnancy Unit within normal working hours or leave a message on the answer phone. The staff in The Early Pregnancy Unit will be happy to speak to you.

Can I go to work?

Yes, if you wish, but it is advisable to return home if the bleeding becomes very heavy. Many women feel very sad after a miscarriage and need extra time off to recover. We will provide a sick certificate.

Why does a miscarriage happen?

Often we never find out the cause of miscarriages, but the most common cause is that for some reason the pregnancy wasn't healthy.

When can I resume normal activities?

Having a bath and shower is safe. You can continue normal activities such as swimming when you feel ready. If you have intercourse again before your follow up pregnancy test, we recommend using contraception to avoid confusion with your result.

When will I get my next period?

Your periods should return 4-6 weeks after the bleeding stops, 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 need urgent assistance

Please contact Gynaecology Ward on:

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

