

Surgical management of your miscarriage



We are very sorry you have had a miscarriage. We hope this information is useful for you in preparing to come into hospital for your operation.

When should I come in to hospital?

Your admission date is:

Your admission time is:

Please arrive at on the planned morning of admission. Please note we do everything we can to ensure your operation is done on the morning of admission, but occasionally there may be a delay due to unforeseen emergencies in the hospital.

What should I bring with me?

We suggest you bring some essentials (sanitary towels, spare underwear, toiletry bag with toothbrush and paste, nightdress or pyjamas, slippers and dressing gown) just in case you need to stay overnight.

Please leave any non-essential valuables at home.

How do I prepare for it?

Please make sure you have nothing to eat after midnight on the night before you come in.

You may also like to have a bath or shower at home on the night before or morning of your admission. Please remove all nail varnish on hands and toes.

On the morning of your operation, please take the two tablets of misoprostol as directed. This helps to make your cervix (neck of your womb) easier to dilate (stretch) during the operation. You may get crampy period-like pain after taking the tablets and possibly sickness and diarrhoea.

What happens when I arrive?

You will be seen first by a nurse on the ward and later by a doctor to check that all your details are correct.

What does the operation involve?

You are given a general anaesthetic (put to sleep) and your cervix is gently dilated. The pregnancy is then removed using a small suction device.

What are the risks?

This is a very safe operation, but occasionally as with any operation there may be complications. These include infection, heavy bleeding and perforation (making a hole) of the womb with the instruments used. If this happens, it may be necessary to look in your tummy with a telescope and if there was internal bleeding, you may need a further operation to repair it. Very rarely, if there is a perforation, there may be damage to the bowel which would need further surgery to repair, and may include removal of a small section of bowel. Occasionally the pregnancy is not all removed and you may need a further operation.

What happens to the pregnancy tissue?

It is usual for any pregnancy tissue to be sent to the laboratory for analysis. We take the upmost care to treat the tissue with respect and dignity. Some of the pregnancy tissue (sometimes all) is then kept as part of your medical records. With your written consent, any remaining pregnancy tissue is taken to Penmount crematorium for collective 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 pregnancy loss.

Why do I need antibiotics?

When you have an operation to remove pregnancy tissue, we routinely give you an antibiotic to try to reduce the risk of infection. Metronidazole is given at the end of the operation..

Will it hurt?

You will be asleep during the operation and not feel anything, but when you wake up, you may have some period-like cramps. We will give you pain killers for this.

Do I need Anti-D?

If your blood group is Rhesus (RhD) negative, you will need an anti-D injection. This is to prevent a condition called Haemolytic Disease of the Newborn (HDN) in any future pregnancy. HDN occurs if your body has made antibodies to RhD positive red blood cells. These antibodies can cross your placenta and destroy the red cells of your fetus. This can result in several conditions ranging from jaundice to, in severe cases, the death of your baby.

It is very important for the safety of any future pregnancies that you have anti-D injections when advised.

When can I go home?

You can usually go home later the same day so long as you have someone to pick you up and stay with you overnight. Please be aware that you cannot drive for 24 hours. However, you may need to stay overnight, so bring an overnight bag just in case.

How long does the bleeding last?

Following your operation, 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 have some tummy cramps and even some small clots, 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 miscarriage is safe. You can have intercourse when you feel ready. 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. We will provide you with a sick certificate if you need one.

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.

You can apply for a certificate of your baby loss at:
babylosscertificate@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

Contact us

If you require urgent assistance please contact:

Gynaecology Ward

01872 253163

Emergency Gynaecology Unit

Monday to Friday - 8.30am to 4.30pm

01872 252686

Further information and support is available from:

The Miscarriage Association

Tel 01924 200799

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

**This leaflet was written and supported by
The Early Pregnancy Unit
Royal Cornwall Hospital 2010**

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

