

Recurrent miscarriage



We are sorry you've had another miscarriage and understand how distressing this can be. This leaflet aims to give you as much information as possible as to why this might have happened, what tests we can offer you and what this means for the future.

What does 'recurrent miscarriage' mean?

A miscarriage is the loss of a pregnancy before 24 weeks. It occurs in at least one in five of all pregnancies, but when this happens three times in a row, this is called 'recurrent miscarriage'.

How common is it?

It occurs in around 1 in 100 women.

Why is it happening to me?

Unfortunately, we may not be able to find out why it keeps happening to you. Often, despite detailed tests, the reasons for recurrent miscarriage cannot be found. There are a number of things that may play a part, but it is a complicated problem and more research is needed. We know that the older you are, the greater your risk of having a miscarriage.

Will I have a successful pregnancy in the future?

If you and your partner feel able to keep trying, there's a good chance of a successful birth in the future – up to three out of every four women who've had three miscarriages in a row will have a successful pregnancy.

We will provide support in any future pregnancy by providing a reassurance scan at around 7 weeks. Couples with a history of recurrent miscarriage can also ask their GP to make a referral to the fertility clinic for further support.

How can I prevent it happening again?

You will be offered a range of tests (described below). If an abnormality is found, we can recommend appropriate treatment. If no abnormality is found, our general advice is to take folic acid (400mcg) at least three months before conceiving and for the first 12 weeks of a pregnancy. Folic acid can be bought in pharmacies and supermarkets and there is no harm taking this long term if it takes a while to get pregnant.

You should also maintain a healthy BMI, avoid smoking and drinking alcohol whilst trying to get pregnant and during a pregnancy. Women who have supportive care from the beginning of a pregnancy have a better chance of a successful birth.

What tests are available?

There are lots of tests offered for women with recurrent miscarriage. We offer tests that are proven to be beneficial in research trials, rather than tests that are still experimental.

Blood tests for antibodies in you

A blood test can look for certain antibodies (anticardiolipin antibodies and lupus anticoagulant). Around 15 in every 100 women who have recurrent miscarriages will have these antibodies. If you are found to have them, treatment with low dose aspirin and sometimes heparin injections in the early part of a pregnancy can improve your chance of a successful pregnancy.

Thyroid function test

There is an increased risk of recurrent miscarriage if you have thyroid dysfunction and thyroid antibodies (thyroid peroxidase - TPO). If these are confirmed on blood tests then you would be offered medication, such as thyroxine, to improve your chances of a successful pregnancy. Having thyroid antibodies, but a normal thyroid function, is not considered a factor for recurrent miscarriage.

Chromosomal test of the pregnancy tissue

If you have a history of recurrent miscarriage and then have another miscarriage, you will be offered genetic testing of the pregnancy tissue. It may not always be possible to get a result, but if we do, it may give us more information that can help you in the future.

If you wish to have this test, please place any tissue passed in a clean, dry pot or jar and store in your fridge. Please bring into the Emergency Gynaecology Unit (EGU) which is open Monday to Friday 9am - 4.30pm.

Where can I get more information and support?

The Miscarriage Association

Clayton Hospital

Northgate

WAKEFIELD WF1 3JS

Tel: 01924 200 799

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Women's Health

52 Featherstone Street

LONDON EC1Y 8RT

Tel: 0845 125 5254

www.womenshealthlondon.org.uk

The Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists

Patient information leaflet – Couples with recurrent miscarriage

www.rcog.org.uk

Contact us

If you have non-urgent questions

Please contact the Emergency Gynaecology Unit (EGU) on:

01872 252686

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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



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