

Miscarriage Information

A miscarriage is defined as any loss before 20 weeks gestation. Most pregnancy losses occur in the first trimester, i.e. before the thirteenth week of gestation. Loss during this time most commonly occurs because of a genetic or developmental problem in the baby or the placenta. Because of this, there is not much that can be done to prevent a first trimester loss. Normal and even relatively strenuous activity does not cause a miscarriage.

What to expect:

The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommends allowing a woman to miscarry naturally. Most patients will wait for tissue to pass without surgical intervention. It is okay to wait up to 3 weeks to allow this to happen. For some patients this is emotionally difficult and they may choose to have a D&C (surgery to remove fetal tissue). If you have not started bleeding within 2 weeks of confirmed loss, you will be scheduled for a D&C either at our office or at the hospital.

Often when you miscarry, you will experience increased bleeding and cramping. Usually you will have some warning such as spotting & light cramping. The cramping and bleeding will usually become more intense just prior to passing the fetal tissue. You will feel pressure often described as feeling like you are going to have a bowel movement. Bleeding and cramping will lessen after the tissue is passed. Afterwards, it is common to have

light spotting for up to 2 weeks.

- We recommend that you take ibuprofen for pain. Dosage recommendations are 800 mg every 8 hours.
- If your blood type is Rh negative, you will need a Rhogam injection.

When to call the office/or go to the emergency room:

- If you are experiencing heavy bleeding, i.e. changing a pad every hour for 3-4 hours.
- Fever greater than 101 °F.
- Abdominal pain not relieved by Motrin/Ibuprofen or Tylenol.
- Vaginal discharge with foul odor.

Following a miscarriage:

- Expect normal menses in 4-6 weeks.
- We will want you to rest one to two cycles before attempting pregnancy. This will depend on how many weeks along you were at the time of miscarriage and your physician's evaluation of your case.
- You will need a follow up appointment with the physician 2-3 weeks after the miscarriage.

Pregnancy Loss

We understand how devastating a pregnancy loss is and want to offer you our support during this time. Losing a baby is especially difficult for couples who have struggled with infertility.

What to expect in the next few weeks:

- Right now you may be in shock and feel tearful much of the time. This is normal.
- People tend to experience grief in stages. Expect that your feelings will change over time and that most people experiencing pregnancy loss have similar feelings.
- You may or may not want to talk with others about what has happened. Feel free to talk as much or as little as you are comfortable. You may want to let others know if you are up for talking.
- As a couple, you may have different reactions to your loss. Be patient with one another. You will each have good days and bad days.
- Let others know if there are specific things that you need. They may not know how to approach you. People are looking for ways to help and you may benefit from giving them some responsibility now to ease your load.
- If you wish, you can name the baby or create memories to help remind you of your baby. This can help you as you think or talk about your baby in the future.

There is a lot of information about healing emotionally after a pregnancy loss. If you feel up to reading, you may want to find a good book or go on the internet to find other helpful suggestions on dealing with your grief. It may also be helpful to hear from others who share a similar experience.

Kristin, our on site counselor in the Grand Rapids office, is an excellent resource. She can meet with you individually or as a couple. This is a service provided to you at no cost, regardless of which of our locations you visit. She is also available by phone if you are unable to come in to the office. Many of our patients find it helpful to talk to someone during this difficult time. Please call the Grand Rapids office at (616) 988-2229 to schedule an appointment.

Recommended book: *Empty Arms: Coping After Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Death* by Sherokee Isle.

Support group:

Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss support
www.nationalshare.org

Miscarriage brochure/mainframe/rls/8-13



The Fertility Center

Dr. William Dodds, Dr. James Young,
Dr. Valerie Shavell, & Dr. Richard Leach

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