Conservative management of a miscarriage (1 of 2)

We are sorry that you are having a miscarriage and hope that this information will help you.

Everyone is an individual and copes with miscarriage in their own way. This leaflet will explain what may happen during your miscarriage and provide advice and contact telephone numbers. We would like to assure you and your partner of our continued support throughout this sad experience.

What is conservative management?

You have chosen conservative management of your miscarriage. This means letting nature take its course and allowing the miscarriage to take place naturally, and avoiding having to come into hospital for an operation.

What will the hospital do?

Before you leave the clinic we will arrange a date in 2 - 3 weeks time when we will phone and check how you are feeling. However, if you are finding it difficult to cope with conservative management, either physically or emotionally, please ring the nurse in the Early Pregnancy Clinic before this time. Management of your miscarriage can be reviewed and surgical management can be discussed at any time.

What can I expect?

It is normal to expect some vaginal bleeding. For some women this may be heavy and it may also contain clots. You may also notice the sac holding the foetus (a gestation sac), embryo or foetus (early baby development). The bleeding will settle down once the miscarriage is complete, which may take up to 7-10 days.

If your bleeding is very heavy with clots and increasing abdominal pain, you should contact the Early Pregnancy Clinic on the number below 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday for further advice. If you are worried outside these hours please contact your GP or go to your nearest emergency department.

Will it hurt?

You may experience abdominal pain and cramping, a bit like period pains, but at times the pain can be stronger when the womb is expelling the pregnancy naturally.

Early Pregnancy Clinic 01722 336262 ex 4431
During the time of the miscarriage we would encourage you to take regular painkiller to ease any discomfort you may have. Paracetamol or ibuprofen should be effective. Please follow the instructions on the information sheet that comes with the medicines.

Is there anything I should look out for?

If you have a temperature or the vaginal discharge becomes smelly, it is possible that you have an infection and may require antibiotics. Please contact us as soon as you can and do not wait for your pre-arranged phone call.

What are my options for disposal of the miscarried tissue

You may complete your miscarriage at home in which case you have no obligation to dispose of the miscarried tissue in any particular way.

Some women and families like to bury the miscarried tissue in the garden or in a pot with a plant. Others prefer to dispose of the tissue in the way they normally dispose of their sanitary products. This is a personal choice and there are no regulations to prevent you doing whatever feels right for you.

If you miscarry in hospital or bring the miscarried tissue into the hospital with you the options for you are slightly different. We offer you the choice of:

- Taking the miscarried tissue home to bury them as above. (If the doctor asks for the tissue to be sent to the laboratory for genetic or cytology examination, the miscarried tissue can be returned to you when testing is complete, if this is what you would like.)
- The hospital has an agreement with the local crematorium who will cremate miscarriage tissue. The miscarried tissue is sensitively handled by all staff throughout the process and each set is wrapped and kept separately. They are taken together for cremation and this is done with up to twelve sets at a time. No service takes place at the crematorium.
- The miscarried tissue can be disposed in the same way that the hospital disposes of other sanitary products through the waste system and then incineration.

You may choose to not accept any of these options. If this happens in hospital please let the nurse or midwife who is looking after you know what you would like to happen.

What support is available for me?

During the early stages of a miscarriage it can be very helpful for you to have your partner or another adult with you to offer emotional and practical support as needed.

If you have a job it is reasonable to have some time off to allow you to grieve for your loss and cope with the physical aspects of your miscarriage. You can self-certificate for your first week of absence and if you need more time off you will need to see your GP.

We will continue to support you and your partner in the Early Pregnancy Clinic until your miscarriage is complete. Your GP will be kept informed of your attendance and your planned management. A miscarriage booklet is available which may help you and your partner with the sad loss of your pregnancy.