



## Threatened Miscarriage

### What is a threatened miscarriage?

A threatened miscarriage is the term used for when you have bleeding in the first 20 weeks of a pregnancy which has been shown, by ultrasound scan, to be growing in your uterus (womb).

Bleeding in early pregnancy is common and usually does not mean that the pregnancy will miscarry.

### Causes of bleeding in early pregnancy

There are many causes of bleeding in early pregnancy. These include:

- Implantation bleeding which occurs when the lining of the uterus is disturbed by the early pregnancy. Implantation bleeding generally only lasts for a day or two before settling.
- Breakthrough bleeding which occurs about the time when a period would have normally been due, usually around weeks 4, 8 and 12 of pregnancy.
- Trauma to the vagina or cervix during sexual intercourse

However, it is important to know that the bleeding can become more serious and continue to an actual miscarriage.

### How do we manage a threatened Miscarriage?

The following tests may be carried when you have bleeding in early pregnancy.

- A full blood count (FBC) to determine the amount of blood loss and to rule out infection
- A pregnancy hormone level (BHCG) blood test or tests over a period of days or weeks to confirm whether the pregnancy is continuing
- An ultrasound scan may be done to check the baby's development and heartbeat and the amount of bleeding
- A vaginal examination may be done to check your cervix

Sometimes these tests are done on the same day and sometimes they are done over several days. They may be done in hospital or in the community and may be followed up by the doctor or nurse at the hospital or by your GP or practice nurse, depending on your symptoms who is responsible for your care at the time.

Your doctor will decide what tests and investigations we need to do to check your pregnancy is continuing and when we need to do them.

### General advice

Let someone know what is happening and that you may need support during this time.

To minimise the chances of infection if you are bleeding, please:

- Wear sanitary pads, not tampons
- Avoid sexual intercourse
- Have a shower, not a bath
- Avoid communal swimming pools, spa pools and avoid swimming in the ocean

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### If you are worried

#### When to ring the Early Pregnancy Clinic

You can always phone the Early Pregnancy Clinic nurse directly on **021 243 9729** or via the hospital operator on **486 8900** Monday to Friday between 9am – 4pm if you are worried about the symptoms you are having.

Outside of these hours, you can either go to your local accident and emergency clinic or to the Emergency Department at North Shore Hospital or Waitakere Hospital.

#### When to go to the Emergency Department

Symptoms that require re-assessment in the Emergency Department are:

- Vaginal bleeding requiring hourly sanitary pad changes
- Abdominal pain that is not relieved by mild pain relief such as Paracetamol
- Light-headedness or dizziness
- A temperature over 38° C
- Hot and cold flu-like symptoms
- Smelly/offensive vaginal bleeding

#### Counselling and support

Women's Health Social Workers – Phone 486 8920 ext 42533 or ext 42718

Chaplaincy Services – Via the hospital operator on 486 8900 (8am – 4pm, Monday to Friday)

Cultural Support Services – Via the hospital operator on 486 8900 (8am – 4pm, Monday to Friday)

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