



What is a miscarriage?

A pregnancy that ends spontaneously before 20 weeks is called a miscarriage. Most women experience vaginal bleeding but occasionally there may be no symptoms. An early miscarriage is usually diagnosed by an ultrasound scan. There are a number of reasons why a baby stops developing and a pregnancy ends early, but often there is no known reason.

What are my choices if a miscarriage is confirmed?

If your ultrasound scan shows that you have miscarried and nothing remains in your womb, you may not need any further treatment.

If the miscarriage is confirmed but some or all of the pregnancy is still inside your womb, your healthcare professional will talk to you about the best options for you.

We hope the information in this pamphlet will support you in making a decision on a suitable option for you and your family.

What are the treatment options?

Some women will miscarry quite quickly but for others the diagnosis and on-going management may take several weeks.

Three options for management of miscarriage are offered through the Early Pregnancy Clinic (EPC). These are Conservative, Medical or Surgical.

Conservative management

Some women may choose to wait and let nature take its course. It is difficult to predict how long this process will take. For the majority of women, this will happen spontaneously.

You will be followed up by the EPC Nurse over several weeks and if bleeding fails to start naturally the options of conservative management, medical treatment or having an operation will again be discussed.

Medical Management

This treatment option involves using a medication called Misoprostol. The medication helps the remaining pregnancy come away.

You can expect some cramps (like strong period pains) in your lower abdomen on the day of your miscarriage. You may get milder cramps or an ache for a day or so afterwards.

This method has proven effective for the majority of women; however, if bleeding has not started 24 hours after treatment, you should contact the EPC Nurse.

After the treatment, you may bleed for up to 3 weeks.

Surgical management

This treatment option, also known as Evacuation of the uterus or D&C involves a short stay (day surgery) in hospital and will require a general anaesthetic which means you will be asleep during the operation. The pregnancy is then removed through the cervix.

The operation is safe but there is a small risk of complications including bleeding, infection or damage to the womb.

If at any stage you change your mind and decide to have other options, you can contact the EPC Nurse on 021 243 9729.

Further Support and Information

Losing a baby is a deeply personal experience that affects people differently. It can be very distressing and you may need a great deal of support afterwards. You can find further information and support from.

- Women's Health Social Worker at North Shore or Waitakere Hospital via the hospital operator on 09 486 8900 for North Shore Hospital and 09 839 0000 for Waitakere Hospital.
- The Miscarriage Support Group website www.miscarriagesupport.org.nz
- The Miscarriage support line on 09 378 4060
- SANDS New Zealand website www.sands.org.nz