

Do you think you could you be miscarrying?

How common are miscarriages?

15% of pregnancies end in miscarriage.

What is a miscarriage and what causes it?

A miscarriage is a pregnancy loss before 20 weeks. Most are random events where an abnormal amount of chromosome is passed on to the fetus. At age 40, one-third of pregnancies end in miscarriage due to a chromosome abnormality. Other causes include genetic problems in the fetus and when mom has certain chronic medical problems such as poorly controlled diabetes, autoimmune disease, or problems with the shape of her uterus.

How do I know if I am miscarrying?

Bleeding and passing clots with or without mild cramping of the lower abdomen or back are the most common symptoms of miscarriage. Please contact your healthcare provider for any of the above symptoms. If you are bleeding through a sanitary pad every 1-2 hours, please go to the nearest emergency room. If you have a history of an ectopic pregnancy and are experiencing abdominal pain, please contact your healthcare provider.

If I have bleeding in early pregnancy does it mean I am having a miscarriage?

A small amount of bleeding is common; however you should contact your healthcare provider.

Are there any tests I should have done?

You may need a pelvic exam and possible ultrasound or a blood test to check your pregnancy hormone and blood type. If your blood type is Rh negative, you may need a special injection to help prevent problems in future pregnancies. If you don't know your blood type, your healthcare provider should check it.

Do I need medical treatment if I miscarried?

Unfortunately, you cannot stop a miscarriage that has already started. If you do not have signs of infection, you may try to pass the tissue without intervention. A medication may be prescribed to help pass the tissue which often leads to heavier bleeding, abdominal cramping, nausea and diarrhea. If you cannot pass the tissue on your own, you may need a minor surgical procedure called a dilation and curettage to remove the contents of your uterus.

What do I do after a miscarriage?

After a miscarriage, you should not have sex or put anything into your vagina for 2 weeks to prevent infection.

It is normal to feel sad or anxious after you have a miscarriage, but true depression can develop. Please let your healthcare provider know how you are feeling, as there are treatments and coping strategies that can help.

How soon can I become pregnant after having a miscarriage?

You need to wait until you have had at least one normal menstrual period before trying to conceive again. You may use birth control or other contraceptives (i.e. condoms, abstinence) to prevent conception during this time.

Can I prevent a miscarriage?

Most women who have a miscarriage go on to have healthy pregnancies in the future. Women who have miscarried are more likely to have other miscarriages. However, you can limit your exposure to infections, alcohol and drug use, as well as ask your provider prior to taking certain medications. If you have had 3 or more pregnancy losses, your provider may want to do additional tests.

References:

Patient Information: Miscarriage (Beyond the Basics). www.uptodate.com

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. FAQ, August 2013.

<http://www.acog.org/~media/For%20Patients/faq090.pdf>