



## **Miscarriage**

A miscarriage is the loss of a pregnancy during the first 20 weeks. Miscarriages are surprisingly common and occur in about 15% of known pregnancies. Most miscarriages are the result of your body ending a pregnancy that would not have been able to survive till when the baby is born. Most women who have had a miscarriage go on to have successful pregnancies in the future.

- **Causes:** The loss of a pregnancy can be very hard to accept. You may wonder why it happened or blame yourself. A miscarriage is no one's fault, and you can't prevent it.
  - Working, stress, exercising, having sex or having used birth control pills before getting pregnant does not cause miscarriage. Some women who have had a miscarriage believe that it was caused by a recent fall or hitting their stomach. In most cases, this is not true.
  - The majority of miscarriages are caused by a random event in which the embryo has an abnormal number of chromosomes. An embryo with an abnormal number of chromosomes often cannot grow or survive.
- **Signs and Symptoms:**
  - Bleeding and passing clots.
  - Cramping of the lower abdomen or a low backache.
    - Keep in mind that both of these can be normal in pregnancy and you should always notify your physician so that you can be closely monitored or further evaluation can be done.
- **Treatment:**
  - If you are diagnosed with a miscarriage and have not passed all of the pregnancy tissue this is called an incomplete miscarriage. There are several options to remove this tissue. Your doctor will go over the options and help you with this decision.
  - If your blood type is RH negative (O-, A-, B- or AB-) you may receive a shot of Rh immunoglobulin. During pregnancy it is possible for the mother's blood to come into contact with the fetal blood cells. If a woman is Rh negative, and the fetus is Rh positive, the contact can cause the mother to make antibodies and this could cause problems in later pregnancies.
- **Follow up:**
  - Call if you having any of the following:
    - Heavy bleeding, Fever/chills, or Severe pain
  - After a miscarriage, you may be advised not to put anything into your vagina (tampons or having sexual intercourse), usually for 2 weeks
  - You should see your physician in a few weeks for a follow up visit.
  - Coping with the loss of the pregnancy can cause feeling of sadness and grief. If you or your partner are having trouble handling the feelings that go along with this loss, call your physician or seek out a counselor.
- **Getting pregnant after a miscarriage:**
  - It may take time for your menstrual cycle to return to normal, typically 4-6 weeks. This period may be heavier than normal. Ovulation can occur within 2 weeks of your miscarriage so it is possible to become pregnant within the month.
- **Links for further education/information:**
  - [www.olsoncenter.com](http://www.olsoncenter.com)
  - [www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)