



Miscarriage Patient Information



Miscarriage: Patient Information

Miscarriage can be a traumatic experience for many women especially if it follows after a long period of trying to conceive or after infertility treatment.

After a miscarriage, a family may experience grief similar to that of losing a child or relative. You may feel many different emotions and have different feelings at different times.

A difficult problem faced by women who have had a miscarriage can be that they have nothing to grieve over. There is generally nothing to see or hold - just a feeling of emptiness and numbness. It can be painful and difficult to unexpectedly have to adjust from the excitement and expectations associated with pregnancy, to the suddenness of a miscarriage and the consequent loss of the hopes, dreams and plans that are formed during pregnancy, in anticipation of the birth of a healthy baby.

Unfortunately, miscarriage is common. Of all pregnancies, where a woman knows that she is pregnant, about one in seven (15%) will end in miscarriage.

The questions that women/couples most commonly ask about miscarriage are outlined below.

Miscarriage. Why does it happen?

The majority of miscarriages occur in the first three months of pregnancy. In most of these cases, the problem is that the egg and sperm have not joined together properly, resulting in an abnormal fetus being formed which cannot develop further. In some cases, the fetus has not developed at all, and there is just a small amount of placental tissue in the uterus. There may be other reasons why pregnancies miscarry after the first three months but in most cases, we do not know the cause.

Is there anything I could have done to prevent it?

No. As most miscarriages are the result of poor formation of the embryo at the time of conception, nothing that happens after that will affect the outcome. It doesn't matter if you went shopping, went bushwalking, had a glass of wine, had sexual intercourse etc. The miscarriage would have happened anyway.

Does this mean that there is something wrong with me or my partner?

Although rarely there is a small problem with one of the parents, it does seem that in most cases, the miscarriage happens by chance and could have happened to anyone.



Some of our friends and relatives avoid the subject of my miscarriage. Why is this?

Most people find another person's loss and grief difficult to cope with. So they avoid talking about it because they don't know what to say and want to avoid saying the wrong thing and hurting your feelings. People frequently feel they don't want to 'remind' you about it, when of course it is at the front of your mind.

You may be able to break the ice by commencing a conversation by "Since my miscarriage....". It then opens up the opportunity for the other person to say "I was sorry to hear"

It is weeks since I miscarried, yet I still feel upset and depressed. Is this normal?

Yes. Some women come to terms with miscarriage very quickly and hardly seem to be affected. But for others, the sadness and depression comes and goes. Your partner may be experiencing similar feelings. How you both react depends on how much the baby meant to you, and the length of time you had been pregnant. It may help to talk about it to your partner, family or friends or to a counselor. If you would like to talk to the counselor at WFC please let us know.

What can I do in the future?

Remember that just because you have had one miscarriage, it does **not** mean that your chances of miscarriage are higher next time. Your risk of miscarriage is the same as that for any other woman. The following tips may, however, be helpful:

- ensure that you eat a balanced diet;
- avoid excess alcohol. However, there is no evidence that small amounts such as a glass or two of wine will harm your pregnancy;
- take folate supplements to prevent spina bifida in your baby;
- Consider whether it may be better to keep the news of your pregnancy to you and your partner until you have had an early ultrasound scan. An early ultrasound scan is very useful as if this is normal, this is good news and means that your chance of having another miscarriage is low.

Finally, remember that although having a miscarriage can be a very sad and emotional experience, at least you have fallen pregnant. Your chances of having children in the future are usually good.