

**PATIENT INFORMATION**

**EXPECTANT  
MANAGEMENT OF  
MISCARRIAGE**



## **WHAT IS EXPECTANT OR CONSERVATIVE MANAGEMENT OF MISCARRIAGE?**

This option is also referred to as letting nature take its course where ladies who have been diagnosed with a miscarriage prefer to watch and wait and allow the miscarriage to happen naturally<sup>2/3</sup>. This is the first line of management for miscarriage recommended by the NICE guidelines and Doctors would also recommend this in the first 9 weeks of pregnancy<sup>1</sup>. Ultimately the decision is your choice, and we will be guided by you. Once counselled, you can make an informed choice about your plan of care. Even if you decide this is the way to go for you, at any stage you can change your mind and opt for some intervention with medical or surgical management. Most women will need no further treatment with this choice. During this time, you may have mixed feelings of sadness and feeling low in mood which is all quite normal.

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME DURING THE MISCARRIAGE? HOW HEAVILY WILL I BLEED?**

During this method bleeding can vary from a number of days to a maximum of 2 to 3 weeks. Some ladies will bleed heavier than others depending on the stage of your pregnancy. You may bleed heavily, pass clots and sometimes the pregnancy sac which may or may not contain the fetus (baby). Some ladies find this distressing<sup>3</sup>. We advise if ladies are coping with their loss they can stay at home, but if your bleeding changes and becomes heavy and you start soaking 3 to 4

pads in an hour and passing large fist sized clots, you need to attend E Ward or A&E.

You may see the pregnancy sac / fetus (which looks like a tiny baby) or it can be encased in a blood clot. The pregnancy sac / fetus can be brought into hospital for sensitive cremation if you wish. Please ask staff for details.

Following expectant management if you experience a heavy period type loss with clots you will be advised to take a urine pregnancy test 3 weeks and contact EPAU with the result. If the pregnancy test result remains positive after 3 weeks, you will be invited to EPAU for a blood test and trans-vaginal scan to rule out any retained tissue.

Alternatively, you can be offered a repeat scan in 2 weeks' time in EPAU to ensure the miscarriage is complete. If you have retained tissue at this time, we will discuss intervention at this stage.

## **HOW MUCH PAIN WILL I HAVE?**

Ladies can experience an uncomfortable feeling, cramping type period pains which can be painful especially as you pass clots, tissue and sometimes including the pregnancy sac. The pain comes from your uterus contracting to expel its contents.

You can take Paracetamol, Co-Codamol (not with Paracetamol) and Ibuprofen for your pain which can be purchased over the counter at a local pharmacy or supermarket. If this medication does not help with your pain, you can contact EPAU/E Ward out of hours as you may need

to attend hospital if they are not working for stronger pain relief / support to help you through this process<sup>1</sup>.

## **ARE THERE ANY RISKS?**

### **Infection**

- Raised temperature or flu like symptoms
- Vaginal discharge which smells
- Bleeding that becomes extremely heavy
- Pain that you are not coping with

If you experience any of the above symptoms, you can ring EPAU/E Ward as you may need some antibiotics<sup>3</sup>.

NB – avoid sexual intercourse until bleeding has stopped and only use sanitary towels until your next period – not tampons to reduce the risk of infection. Do not have a hot bath as it increases your risk of fainting.

We would advise to avoid driving and exercise/sport until the bleeding slows down.

We would also advise staying off work until the bleeding settles down or you feel able to return.

## **Heavy bleeding**

If you experience heavy bleeding and start soaking 3-4 sanitary towels in an hour, and pass large clots, you will need to attend E Ward or A&E<sup>3</sup>.

## **Retained tissue**

On the rare occasion this treatment does not work, further intervention is required to resolve the situation, this may include medical or surgical management.

## **EXPECTANT MANAGEMENT ADVANTAGES**

- No further treatment is usually needed and you can manage your miscarriage in the comfort of your own home as an outpatient.
- Avoid hospital admission and general anaesthetic.
- Say goodbye to your pregnancy in the privacy of your own home.
- Pregnancy test at home avoiding the need to attend hospital / EPAU.
- You have access to support at any time – contact numbers are provided on this literature.

## **WHEN CAN I TRY AGAIN**

If you are considering a future pregnancy, we advise you to await your next normal period which helps calculate date of conception, this is usually 4 to 6 weeks after your miscarriage. We advise a healthy diet and lifestyle to optimise the chances of a future healthy pregnancy.

If you want to consider contraception we advise to liaise with your GP or local family planning clinic.

## **CONTACT NUMBERS IF ANY CONCERNS**

This leaflet has been designed to support you through your miscarriage whilst being at home. If you need any information before you make your decision, please contact us so we can help you make your decision.

- EPAU 01695 656064 Mon-Fri 08:30-16:30
- E Ward 01695 656901 (24 hours)
- Your own GP

## **OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS/WEBSITES**

A&E 01704 704131

Miscarriage Association 01942 200799

NHS 111

[www.rcog.org.uk/patientleaflets/early-miscarriage](http://www.rcog.org.uk/patientleaflets/early-miscarriage)

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/miscarriage](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/miscarriage) [www.uk.sands.org](http://www.uk.sands.org)

## **REFERENCES**

- 1 NICE Guidelines November 2021
- 2 Miscarriage Association – The Knowledge to Help 2019
- 3 Guideline 47 Obs / Gynae Management of ectopic pregnancy and bleeding in early pregnancy. Southport & Ormskirk NHS Trust. (Review date: May 2025)
- 4 NBCP Miscarriage, Ectopic Pregnancy and Molar Pregnancy Bereavement Care Pathway August 2022

**Notes**



**During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have questions or concerns.**

## **MATRON**

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

## **INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST**

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

## **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS**

**ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:**

**CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION**

☐ Your own GP

**OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:**

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) – 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) – 0800 328 6297



**Please call 01704 704714 if you need  
this leaflet in an alternative format**

**Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust**

Ormskirk & District General Hospital  
Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ  
Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital  
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN  
Tel: (01704) 547471

**FOR APPOINTMENTS**

Telephone (01695) 656680  
Email [soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net)

We would welcome your feedback about your experience  
at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust.  
Please access the Friends and Family Test at the following  
link:

[https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-  
visitors/fft/](https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/fft/)

**Thank you**

Author: Sara Jane McNichol / Stephanie Nicholson  
Ref: 19/17  
Version: 4  
Reviewed: March 2023  
Next Review: March 2026