

Treatment Options after Miscarriage

Failed pregnancy, also referred to as a miscarriage, occurs in roughly 25% of all recognized pregnancies. It is diagnosed by an early obstetric ultrasound. After diagnosis, the following three treatment options will be discussed. Some women are able to decide immediately, and others may take some time to decide. Please refer to this informational handout and contact your patient care coordinator with any questions, and ultimately inform us how you would like to proceed.

Expectant Management

This option entails watchful waiting for spontaneous passage of the tissue*. This will occur in roughly 40% of patients. The bleeding will usually start out light and then get progressively heavier over a 24-48 hour time period. Some women will have spotting or light bleeding off and on for several days before the start of heaving bleeding. If bleeding exceeds soaking more than one large sanitary pad within one hour for two consecutive hours, please contact us immediately. You may also pass small clots, typically quarter sized or less. Call if you pass larger clots or continue to pass clots/tissue for more than two consecutive hours. Cramping is often present during this time. You may take Ibuprofen or Tylenol (per package insert instructions) for pain, please call if your pain is not controlled with over the counter medications. After experiencing heavy bleeding, we will want you to come back for an ultrasound within one week to make sure all the tissue has passed and to see if additional interventions are needed. If you do not experience any bleeding within 2 weeks of diagnosis, or if you develop a fever or any other symptoms that are concerning to you, please contact your care coordinator for next steps.

Medical Management

This option involves vaginal use of a medication called Misoprostol to cause the uterus to contract and hopefully expel the pregnancy tissue*. The dose may be repeated in 12 hours if no response. Additional medications are prescribed to treat the side effects that include abdominal pain, diarrhea, indigestion, and nausea. This option is effective in 80-90% of patients. Please refer to patient handout entitled “Misoprostol (Cytotec)” for further details; it will be provided if you decide on this option.

Surgical Management

Dilatation and Curettage (D&C) is a surgery to remove the pregnancy tissue from the uterus. There are risks associated with the procedure including: risks associated with anesthesia, bleeding, infection, and development of scar tissue in the uterus. These risks are very low. D&C is often a first choice, but would also be recommended if the above treatment options fail or if the bleeding becomes too heavy. Please refer to patient handout entitled “Dilatation and Curettage (D&C)” for further details; it will be provided if you decide on this option.

* If your provider has recommended collecting the products of conception tissue to be sent to the lab for genetic analysis, you will need to place the tissue in the collection kit provided, or alternatively in a new Ziploc bag or plastic container. Contact (PRACTICE) to arrange drop off of the sample and possible blood

testing (if indicated); in the meantime you will need to refrigerate the sample (do not place in freezer and do not add any additional liquids).

Additional Information

If you are Rh-negative, you will be asked to return to the clinic for a RhoGAM® injection in order to protect future pregnancies. Please refer to patient handout entitled “RhoGAM®” for further information if this applies to you.

After a miscarriage, you will typically get your next period in about 4-6 weeks. During this waiting timeframe we will want you to follow up with your physician to regroup and discuss additional questions before resuming pregnancy attempts. Many women will take more time to recover emotionally before trying again. We also have counselors available for support, who provide consultation in person or over the phone. Many patients find this to be helpful. You can schedule a counselor visit by calling our office (888) 551-0874. Please also call this number should you need to reach a physician after-hours for any of the medical concerns discussed above.