



Medical management of miscarriage

What is outpatient medical management of miscarriage?

This is a method of encouraging and completing a miscarriage for you without requiring a general anaesthetic or hospital admission.

Your written consent is required before the medication is given.

What medication will I be given?

Four tablets called Misoprostol will be inserted into the vagina. This is followed by insertion of a tampon to ensure the misoprostol stay in place and dissolve at the neck of the womb. You may find a chalky discharge, this is only the tablet dissolving, and the medicine would have been absorbed by this point.

This can be undertaken by a member of nursing staff or you may prefer to do this yourself. You may remove tampon after 3-4 hours.

Misoprostol softens the neck of the womb (cervix) and encourages miscarriage. You will be allowed home after 15 minutes providing you are accompanied by an adult who will take you home – you must not drive yourself. You should avoid alcohol.

What will happen when I go home?

In the following days you will experience the onset of bleeding. We will advise you what medication to take to help with your pain. The pain can range from mild to severe as the womb contracts in order to complete a miscarriage. Generally paracetamol 500mg x 2 tablets and Ibuprofen 400mgs can be taken, if you are not allergic. A hot water bottle wrapped in a towel next to the abdomen may help with the abdominal discomfort.

It is difficult to generalise on how heavy the bleeding will be and the level of pain you may experience. Bleeding may be similar to a very heavy period and you may pass some large clots. In most cases the pain and the bleeding will begin to ease within a few hours although you may continue to get some pain for a few days and you may bleed for up to 3 weeks.

If you are concerned, please ring the Early Pregnancy Unit, the number is at the end of the leaflet.



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Occasionally the bleeding can become heavy and require you to be admitted and occasionally it may be necessary to have an operation to complete the miscarriage. This can be done under local anesthetic (MVA).

General Information

It is advisable that you have an adult with you at home when bleeding is heavy.

Misoprostol tablets rarely cause nausea, headache or skin rashes.

You should only wear sanitary towels for bleeding. You should not have intercourse whilst you are bleeding as this may lead to infection.

Bleeding may be very heavy with clots, and you may need to return to hospital if it fails to settle or you are feeling unwell. You may pass identifiable pregnancy tissue and may wish to make sensitive arrangements for this. You can discuss this further with a nurse on the unit.

Please do a pregnancy test one week after the bleeding has stopped. If the test is positive contact the early pregnancy unit. The pregnancy test may be positive due to high pregnancy hormone level (Bhcg) in your system. If the pregnancy test is negative it indicates the miscarriage is complete and no further action is needed.

If you require any further information or support please ring:

Early Pregnancy/Emergency Gynaecology Unit: 01793 605257.

You have 24 hour access to this service.



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From 1st January 2019 smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

Document Control

Division: Women & Children's
Department: Gynaecology
Approved Date: 21 March 2019
Next Review Date: April 2022
Document Number: W&C - PIL0049