

Pregnancy Loss



If you have been given this handout, then you unfortunately, have been diagnosed with a miscarriage. The medical term is a “Missed Abortion”. This is a difficult time for you and your family and we are very sorry for that. It is important for you to realize there is nothing you did to cause the miscarriage and there is nothing we can do to prevent a miscarriage. It is NOT because you lifted something heavy or cleaned the house and to be honest, lying in bed wouldn’t have stopped it. They are not unusual. It has been estimated that up to one-third of all pregnancies miscarry. Most miscarriages occur in the first 12 weeks and the majority of those occur in the first 8 weeks.

There are several options once you have been diagnosed with a miscarriage. The first is to just wait and see what happens. Frequently, a woman will pass the pregnancy on her own (a “Spontaneous Abortion”) but that can sometimes take several weeks. Often, once a woman has been told the pregnancy is no longer viable, she often wants it to be over as soon as possible.

Another way to proceed is a D & C (Dilatation and Curettage). This is a surgical procedure that is done in the hospital. It would be scheduled at the soonest time available. You report 1-hour before the scheduled time, and cannot eat for 8 hours prior to arriving at the hospital. Blood is drawn and an IV is started. You are taken to the operating room, given sedation (you are not intubated but you do not remember anything) and the procedure is performed. Your cervix is opened up and suction is used to remove the tissue. Then, the uterus is scraped to make sure all tissue is removed. This takes about 5 – 10 minutes to perform. After the procedure, you recover for 1 – 2 hours and are sent home. This is a surgical procedure, and it carries risk. There is a risk of bleeding, infection, incomplete removal of tissue and perforation of the uterus with the instruments. These are uncommon but can happen. You are told to not have sex, take a bath, douche or use tampons for 2 weeks. Also, you should not try to become pregnant for 3 months after a D & C.

Another option is the use of medication to cause you to miscarry. Cytotec (generic term is misoprostol) is given (4 – 200 mcg tablets taken at one time) and repeated 8 hours later. It is also recommended you take ibuprofen (4 – 200 mcg tablets every 8 hours) and even Percocet (1 – 2 tablets every 4 hours) because there is significant cramping and bleeding with a miscarriage. Women have said it can be as bad as labor but it is much shorter. The heavy bleeding and cramping last for 1 or 2 hours (if it goes on longer, please call us) and gets much better after the tissue has passed. Occasionally, this does not work at all or not all of the tissue is passed and a D & C is needed. The advantage to a medically induced miscarriage is that it is NOT a surgical procedure (and avoids the risks associated with surgery). Also, you only have to wait one period before trying to get pregnant. The disadvantage is the pain and bleeding occurs at home.

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BALTIMORE
341 N. Calvert Street
Suite 201
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

CATONSVILLE
7001 Johnnycake Road
Suite 105
Windsor Mill, Maryland 21244

DUNDALK
6610 Tributary Street
Suite 206
Baltimore, Maryland 21224

CONTACT
office: 410-633-6300
fax: 410-633-6736
web: hoffmanobgyn.com

Pregnancy Loss *continued*



It is your decision as to which option you choose. We may give you our recommendation but it comes down to what you want, and what makes you most comfortable. Usually, you are not ready to make a decision at the time you are told about the loss. Often, you have come to the office for what you thought would be a normal visit and are given this terrible information. It is okay to take some time and consider your options. Talk to family or friends and please, ask questions.

If you have decided to wait, please make an appointment for 1 week. If you do miscarry in that time, we want to examine you to make sure everything is okay and if you haven't miscarried, we want to re-evaluate you and talk about other options.

If you have decided to have a D & C, please call us so that we can schedule the procedure. You will need an appointment for a post-operative exam two weeks later.

If you have decided to have a medically induced miscarriage, we will try to supply you with the Cytotec but you will be responsible for the ibuprofen and Percocet. You also will need an appointment within a week to make sure there were no complications.

Again, we are very sorry that you have had this happen. We understand how hard it can be to find out that your pregnancy is not going to continue. Often, if you talk to family and friends, you will be surprised at how many women have had miscarriages. Please remember having one or even two miscarriages does not mean you can not have a normal pregnancy. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Schedule of Medications

8 Hours before Cytotec	8 Hours Later	8 Hours Later
800 mg ibuprofen	800 mg ibuprofen	800 mg ibuprofen
800 mcg cytotec	800 mcg cytotec	
	percocet 1 - 2 tabs every 4 hrs as needed for pain	

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