



A guide to...

Surgical Management of Miscarriage

Patient Information

How to contact us

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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version,
please call **01923 217 198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



Department	Gynaecology Department
Ratified / Review Date	July 2023 / July 2026
ID Number	28/2123/V2



We are very sorry that you have had a miscarriage. We hope this information is useful for you in preparing to come into hospital for your operation.

Admission date

Admission time

at: Gynaecology Ambulatory Care Unit - Elizabeth Ward
1st Floor, Maternity Unit, Watford General Hospital

We will do everything we can to ensure your operation is done at the planned time of admission, regrettably there may be a delay occasionally due to unforeseen emergencies within the hospital which are beyond our control.

When do I come into hospital?

You will be told what time to arrive or will be given a telephone number to call to ensure that a bed is available. Timing will also depend on whether you are on a morning or afternoon list.

What do I bring with me?

We suggest you bring in some essentials (sanitary towels, spare underwear, toiletry bag with toothbrush and toothpaste, nightdress or pyjamas, slippers and dressing gown), just in case you need to stay in overnight. Please leave any non-essential valuables at home.

What preparation do I need to do?

Please make sure that you have nothing to eat after midnight on the night before you come in. You may have a small glass of plain water on the morning of admission, but please don't drink juice, tea or coffee with milk or your operation may be postponed.

- You may also like to have a bath or shower at home on the night before/morning of admission.
- If you are on an afternoon list, you can eat a light breakfast before 7am and drink water up until 9.00am

What happens when I arrive on the ward?

You will be seen first by a nurse on the ward and later by a doctor to check all the details you have already given us are correct.

What happens to me during the operation?

You are given a light anaesthetic (put to sleep) and the cervix (opening of womb) is gently dilated (stretched). Then the pregnancy is removed using a small suction device.

What are the risks?

This is a very safe operation, but occasionally, as with any operation there can be complications. These include infection, heavy bleeding and perforation (making a hole) of the womb with the instruments used. If this happened, it may be necessary to look in your tummy with a telescope and if there was internal bleeding, even do a further operation to repair it. Occasionally the pregnancy is not all removed and there may be the need for a further operation.

Will it hurt?

You will be asleep during the operation and not feel anything, but when you wake up, you may experience some “period-like” cramps. We will give you painkillers for this.

When can I go home?

Most women are fine to go home the same day as long as you have an adult to pick you up and stay with you overnight. Please be aware that you cannot drive for 24 hours. However, some women need to stay overnight, so bring an overnight bag, just in case.

How long does the bleeding last?

The bleeding can go on for one to two weeks after the operation, occasionally up until three weeks. It should be getting lighter – like the tail of a period. You should not use tampons for the bleeding, just pads. It is normal to experience some tummy cramps and even some small clots after the operation, but if the bleeding becomes very heavy or the pain very severe, or if you have an unpleasant smelling discharge, you should see your GP as you may need antibiotics.

When can I get back to normal activities?

Having a bath/shower after the operation is safe, although we recommend avoiding swimming until after the bleeding has stopped. You should avoid sexual intercourse for at least a week after the bleeding has stopped. You should be fine physically to go back to work a few days after your operation, but many women feel very sad after a miscarriage and need a little extra time off to recover. In this case, you would need to see your GP to arrange a sick note.

When will I get my period again?

Your periods should return within four to six weeks, but this varies.

When can I try again?

There is no “right” time to start trying again; you can start to try as soon as the bleeding stops, and you both feel “ready” emotionally.

Will it happen again?

The chances of a successful pregnancy next time are very high. Stopping smoking and reducing your alcohol intake both increases your chances of having a healthy pregnancy. If you are trying to conceive, you should be taking folic acid to reduce the risk of neural tube defects such as spina bifida.

If you require urgent assistance, please contact -

Gynaecology Day Assessment Unit (GDAU) Tel: 01923 217 344 or

Early Pregnancy Unit (Mon-Fri, 9.00am - 5.00pm) Tel: 01923 217831

You can get more information and support from:

The Miscarriage Association Tel 01924 200 799

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk