

# Threatened Miscarriage

Pregnancy is a time of joy and hope for expectant parents, but also, sometimes, worry.

One worrying development can be bleeding. Some light spotting is normal, but heavier bleeding and cramping in the first 20 weeks could be a sign of what's known as a Threatened Miscarriage. Risk factors for miscarriage include being 35 or older, having a past miscarriage or an infection during pregnancy; smoking, taking certain medications including Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs or NSAIDs; and consuming alcohol or caffeine.

*“If a woman comes in with bleeding during early pregnancy, we ask detailed questions to identify possible risk factors and then we perform a careful physical exam. We also perform certain tests.”*

Those tests include ultrasound, which uses sound waves to create an image of the fetus. A blood test checks levels of Human Chorionic Gonadotropin, or HCG—a hormone the body produces during pregnancy. A drop in this hormone could signal a problem. Sometimes the test shows an underlying condition, like a pregnancy growing in a Fallopian Tube. This is called an Ectopic Pregnancy, and it's a medical emergency.

*“There's no way to prevent a miscarriage once it starts. In most cases, miscarriages are caused by genetic problems in the developing baby. It's rarely caused by anything the mother may have done. She really shouldn't feel guilty.”*

Rest as much as you can until the bleeding stops. Avoid exercise and sex until your provider says it's ok. Use a sanitary pad, not tampons, if you're bleeding. And don't douche. A threatened miscarriage can be an emotional experience. Talking about your feelings with a therapist or other mental health provider can help. Get immediate medical attention for abnormal or heavy bleeding, severe pain, weakness or fainting.

*“Most women who have a threatened miscarriage go on to deliver a healthy baby. But if you see anything or feel anything out of the ordinary during your pregnancy you should contact your health care provider.”*