

# MISCARRIAGE MANAGEMENT: LETTING NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE

Many women choose to “watch and wait,” letting their bodies complete a miscarriage. Other women choose either to use medication or a procedure to help control the process. If the natural process no longer feels right or is taking too long, you may switch to medication or a procedure.

## How do we know it is a miscarriage?

You may be bleeding and cramping. You may no longer feel pregnant. Your provider may have done a pelvic exam, blood work or an ultrasound to see if you are having a miscarriage. You may need 2 or more visits to be sure.

## What should I expect?

If you are already bleeding, this will likely continue with cramping and the passage of tissue and blood clots. Heavy bleeding may last for 3-5 hours. You may see some grey or white tissue. After that you may have light, period-like bleeding for 1-2 weeks. The whole process may take weeks. Bleeding may stop and start. Your provider might give you the medication that speeds up the process for you to have on hand, just in case.

If you have not yet started to bleed, you will be waiting for your body to begin the process. This can take days or weeks. Some women don't mind waiting, while others want to speed up the process. You can change your mind if you think you want medication or a procedure to help you.

## How well does the natural watch and wait choice work?

90% of the time for an incomplete miscarriage (when the pregnancy tissue is already passing on its own)

75% of the time for fetal or embryonic demise (when the pregnancy has stopped growing but is not passing on its own)

66% of the time for Anembryonic pregnancy or “empty sac” (when the pregnancy stopped growing before the fetus began)

## What can I take for pain?

- **Medicine:** For cramps, take ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) 800 mg up to 3 times a day. Take this with food to avoid stomach upset. Your provider may have given you a medication combining acetaminophen (Tylenol) with codeine or hydrocodone: follow directions on the label. It's ok to combine ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and codeine or hydrocodone.

- **Comfort:** A hot pack may help with cramps. It is a good idea to rest in a soothing place.

### **When should I call or return to my provider?**

- If your bleeding becomes very heavy and you are soaking 2 maxi pads each hour for 2 hours back-to-back.
- If the strong cramping is not helped by medication or goes on for more than 24 hours.
- If you feel dizzy or feel like you may “pass out.”
- If you have foul smelling discharge, fever over 101° F, chills, or strong pelvic pain.
- If you change your mind and want medication or a procedure.
- If you have overwhelming feelings of sadness or depression. Please understand that nothing you did caused the miscarriage. Sometimes a miscarriage is a relief. Either way you may want to talk to a counselor. Sometimes families and friends mean well but may not know what to say to for comfort. Let your providers know if you need help.

### **How soon can I get pregnant again?**

You can get pregnant soon after the miscarriage is over. If you want to try again, take folic acid daily. If you are not ready for pregnancy at this time, please come to your provider for your birth control options. If you have had three miscarriages, you should discuss this with your provider

### **How can I contact my provider?**

Call \_\_\_\_\_

My follow up appointment is scheduled on: \_\_\_\_\_ at  
\_\_\_\_\_am/pm with \_\_\_\_\_

At the follow up you may have another examination and possible a blood test or an ultrasound to be sure the process is complete.