

# EARLY PREGNANCY LOSS (MISCARRIAGE) TREATMENT: LETTING NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Many people choose to “watch and wait,” letting their bodies complete a pregnancy loss. Other people choose either to use medication or a procedure to help control the process.

## HOW WELL DOES THE NATURAL “WATCH AND WAIT” CHOICE WORK?

The “watch and wait” method works 66% to 90% of the time.

## IS IT SAFE?

Yes, the “watch and wait” option is a safe way to complete a pregnancy loss. The “watch and wait” method does not lower your chance of getting pregnant again.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

- 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 clinician might give you the medication that speeds up the process just in case you change your mind.
- If you have not yet started to bleed, you will wait for your body to begin the process. This can take days or weeks. Some people don't mind waiting, while others want to speed up the process. You can change your mind if you want medication or a procedure.

## WHAT CAN I TAKE FOR PAIN?

- **Medicine:**
  - Take ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) 800 mg every 8 hours as needed for pain. Take this with food to avoid an upset stomach.
  - Your clinician may have given you a medication combining acetaminophen (Tylenol) with codeine or hydrocodone: follow the directions on the label.
  - It's ok to combine ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and codeine or hydrocodone.
- **Comfort:** A hot pack may help with cramps. You can also drink some hot tea. Rest in a soothing place.

## WHAT IF IT TAKES TOO LONG OR DOESN'T WORK?

If you feel it is taking too long, you can return to your clinician at any time for medication or a procedure.

## WHEN SHOULD I CALL OR RETURN TO MY CLINICIAN?

- If the bleeding becomes very heavy and soaks through more than 2 maxi pads per hour for 2 hours in a row
- If the strong cramping is not helped by medication or goes on for more than 1 day
- If you feel dizzy or feel like you may “pass out”
- If you have foul-smelling discharge, fever over 101°F (38.3° C), chills, or strong pelvic (lower abdominal) pain

Let your clinician know if you need help. No question is too small. Your clinician knows this may be a tough time for you and you have received a lot of instructions. If you forget something, call your clinician. Keep a follow-up appointment with your clinician.

## HOW SOON CAN I GET PREGNANT AGAIN?

You can get pregnant soon after the pregnancy loss is over. If you want to try again, take a prenatal vitamin daily. If you are not ready to be pregnant at this time, please come to your clinician for your birth control options.

## FEELINGS AFTER AN EARLY PREGNANCY LOSS

**Please understand that nothing you did caused the pregnancy loss.** A pregnancy loss is nature's way of ending a pregnancy that would not be healthy. An early pregnancy loss is NOT caused by stress, sports, food, or sex. Sometimes families and friends don't know what to say. If you feel very upset, you may want to talk to a counselor.