

# PREGNANCY LOSS (MISCARRIAGE)

## WHAT IS PREGNANCY LOSS OR MISCARRIAGE?

Pregnancy loss, often called miscarriage, happens when a pregnancy stops growing. This is very common. About 1 in 4 pregnancies end in a pregnancy loss, mostly in the first 3 months.

## WHAT CAUSES PREGNANCY LOSS?

A pregnancy loss is almost never caused by something you did. Past abortions, sex, exercise, mild falls, spicy foods, and most medications do not cause an early pregnancy loss. There is a higher chance of a pregnancy loss with older age, some chronic illnesses, some infections, changes in the uterus, and severe injury.

When a pregnancy starts, cells divide fast to make an embryo, and sometimes errors occur. Your body notices this, and the pregnancy stops growing.

Most types of pregnancy loss don't affect your chances of having a normal pregnancy in the future. If you have more than 2 pregnancy losses in a row, you may be at a greater risk of future pregnancy loss. You can talk to your clinician about this.

## WHAT WILL I SEE AND FEEL WHEN I HAVE A PREGNANCY LOSS?

- Bleeding or spotting from the vagina
- Passing small or large clots
- Cramps or abdominal pain
- Back pressure or pain

These symptoms may be minor or severe. They may last a few days or weeks.

Contact your clinician for a visit as soon as you notice bleeding, cramping, and/or pain.

These symptoms can be part of a normal pregnancy, but it is a good idea to have more tests done. If you have very heavy bleeding or a fever above 101F, go to the emergency room.

## WHAT HAPPENS DURING A PREGNANCY LOSS?

During a pregnancy loss, the pregnancy leaves the uterus through the cervix and the vagina.

A clinician can do an ultrasound image of the uterus to find out what is going on. If a pregnancy loss has started, it is not possible to stop your body from continuing to pass the pregnancy tissue.

If the pregnancy tissue does not pass on its own, or if you would prefer to help your body pass the pregnancy more quickly, you have options. Your clinician can give you a medication that you can take at home to help pass the tissue. You can also have a procedure in the health center to remove the pregnancy tissue with gentle suction.

## AFTER A PREGNANCY LOSS:

Pregnancy loss can be hard. It is okay to give yourself time to heal and check in with your emotions. There is no right or wrong way to feel, and there is no "normal" amount of time that you will need to recover. Your period will return in 4-8 weeks.

Speak with your clinician to learn how to prevent another pregnancy until you are ready, or about becoming pregnant again. If you have a hard time going back to your normal activities, speak with your clinician so that you can get the support you need. You can also call the All-Options Support Talkline toll-free at 1-888-493-0092 for peer-based counseling and support.