

MEDICAL MANAGEMENT OF A MISCARRIAGE

Once you have been diagnosed with a miscarriage your doctor will talk to you about the options on management. Medicines may be used to start a miscarriage if you prefer not to wait for events to happen naturally. The tablet we use is called misoprostol (cytotec). It works by softening the neck of the womb and also by stimulating the muscles of the womb to contract.

The dose we use is 600mcgs (3 tablets) and that is usually taken by mouth and repeated in 4 hours time. Recognised side effects associated with misoprostol include diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, hot flushes and chills. These should not be a cause for concern but please contact the hospital if you are worried. After taking the tablets you will have crampy period- like pains for which you may need some painkillers. You will also have bleeding that is heavy initially for a couple of hours. You may pass some clots but soon the bleeding will settle down and continue like a period for up to 7-10 days.

If you feel weak or if the bleeding continues to be very heavy and you are concerned please do not hesitate to come into our emergency department. If you are bleeding and develop a high temperature you should contact your GP or our emergency department. It is best to use sanitary towels rather than tampons until your next period to help avoid infection. We also advise you to avoid having sexual intercourse until the bleeding stops. You can bath or shower as normal.

In most cases the above treatment is all that is needed. In order to check if all the tissue has come away, we will give you an appointment for a repeat scan before you leave the unit. In a small group of cases (5-10%) an operation may be necessary should there still be some tissue left within the womb or the bleeding becomes heavier.

Most women find that they are able to return to their usual activities within 48-72 hours. However, you may want to take a few days off work to rest and our staff can give you a sick certificate. If you are going to try for another baby we advise that you wait until you have had a normal period, which you should have 3-4 weeks after a miscarriage, provided your periods were regular before.

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