

## Aurora Holistic Care Pty Ltd

### Patient information: Early pregnancy bleeding

**What is early pregnancy bleeding?** – When vaginal bleeding occurs in a pregnant patient carrying <12 weeks of pregnancy, it is called early pregnancy bleeding.

**Why is it important to report early pregnancy bleeding to a doctor/nurse?** -- Such bleeding could point to serious conditions like miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy (a serious condition where pregnancy grows outside the uterus).

**What is a miscarriage?** — A miscarriage is when a pregnancy ends before a woman has been pregnant for 20 weeks. (A normal pregnancy lasts about 40 weeks.) The most common symptoms of a miscarriage are bleeding from the vagina and pain in lower abdomen or cramping.

**What is a threatened miscarriage?** — A threatened miscarriage is when a woman has bleeding from the vagina, but her pregnancy has not actually ended. The medical term for a threatened miscarriage is a “threatened spontaneous abortion.”

In a threatened miscarriage, 1 of 2 things can happen. Most of the time, the bleeding will stop on its own and the pregnancy will continue normally. But sometimes, a threatened miscarriage will become a miscarriage.

**Did I do anything to cause my threatened miscarriage?** — You probably did not do anything to cause your threatened miscarriage. And if your threatened miscarriage becomes a miscarriage, it is also probably not because of anything you did.

Most of the time, a miscarriage happens when a pregnancy does not grow normally from the beginning. Mother nature makes a lot of mistakes while making a baby (embryo), miscarriage is nature’s way of getting rid of abnormal babies. 90% of early pregnancy miscarriages are because of genetic abnormalities (not necessarily inherent, not necessarily affecting your future pregnancies).

**What are the symptoms of a threatened miscarriage?** — Women with a threatened miscarriage have bleeding from the vagina. Some women also have pain in their belly, but most women don’t.

There are other conditions that can cause bleeding from the vagina during the first half of pregnancy. But the most common causes have to do with miscarriage.

**Should I call my doctor or nurse?** — Yes. If you are pregnant and have bleeding from your vagina, call your doctor or nurse right away. Bleeding during pregnancy can sometimes be a symptom of an emergency condition.

**Will I need tests?** — Yes. Your doctor or nurse will ask about your symptoms and do an examination. He or she will check for your baby’s heartbeat. There are 2 main ways doctors can do this. They can use:

- A device called a “fetal Doppler monitor” – The doctor puts this device on your belly. It uses sound waves to let you hear your baby’s heartbeat.
- An imaging test called an ultrasound – An ultrasound uses sound waves to create pictures of the inside of your body and of your baby. This test can show pictures of your baby’s heartbeat.

Your doctor will probably also do a test to measure the amount of “hCG” (a pregnancy hormone) in your blood. You might need to have this test again a few days later.

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Your doctor will also request blood grouping. If your blood group is negative, your doctor will give you an injection regardless of the outcome of the pregnancy.

**How is a threatened miscarriage treated?** — Unfortunately, there are not many reliable treatments for a threatened miscarriage. Doctors can use a medicine called progesterone to try to prevent a miscarriage in women who have vaginal bleeding, but this medicine doesn't always work.

Sometimes, doctors recommend that women with vaginal bleeding lie in bed or avoid having sex, but these treatments have not been shown to help prevent a miscarriage either.

**What is ectopic pregnancy?** -It is a condition where pregnancy grows outside of uterus.

**What are the signs/symptoms of ectopic pregnancy?** -Early pregnancy bleeding & lower abdominal pain are the most common symptoms. When such pregnancy ruptures (bursts) inside your belly, you may have syncope or you may faint. It is a very serious condition that requires immediate medical attention.

**How is ectopic pregnancy diagnosed?** – Apart from clinical features described above, blood test to measure pregnancy hormone (hCG) & an ultrasound is done. Most of the time more than one readings of hCG 48 hours apart are required to make the diagnosis.

**Is ectopic pregnancy common?** – No, certainly not as common as threatened miscarriage. But as it is a serious condition, it always needs to be ruled out in any case of early pregnancy bleeding.

**If you have bleeding from your vagina, your doctor will follow your symptoms until:**

- Your bleeding stops, and he or she has made sure that your pregnancy is growing normally.
- You have a miscarriage. If this happens, your doctor will talk with you about what to do next.