

Experiencing a pregnancy loss under 12 weeks Gestation Histopathology Information Leaflet for Patients

This leaflet explains your option for histopathology testing of the baby / pregnancy remains after early miscarriage (up to 12 weeks' gestation).

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to discuss with the health professional looking after you or a member of the Gynaecology Emergency Department (24hr number) 0151 702 4438 or The Honeysuckle Bereavement Team: 0151 702 4151 Mon-Fri: 8am-4pm Email : honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk

Introduction

The Honeysuckle Team are the dedicated baby bereavement team at Liverpool Women's Hospital. We are very sorry you have experienced a miscarriage. We understand that this will be a difficult time for you to make decisions and we hope that the following information will be of help.

We would like to assure you that The Honeysuckle Team ensure that all babies and the remains of pregnancies are treated with care and respect.

You have been asked to consider giving verbal consent to Histopathological examination of your pregnancy loss. This information together with the discussions that you will have with the health professionals caring for you will assist you in making the choices that you feel are right for you.

Genetic testing on the pregnancy remains will only be offered if there was a known fetal abnormality or if this is your third or more miscarriage, which is in keeping with national guidelines.

What Is Histopathology testing and why is it recommended?

Histopathology is the microscopic examination of the appearance of cells and tissues in very fine detail to exclude any abnormalities.

Histopathology testing is advisable although not compulsory.

We need to examine your pregnancy remains/baby to exclude a rare condition called Molar Pregnancy (Gestational Trophoblast Disease). This is a condition where pregnancy and placental tissue develop abnormally and this can be the cause for your miscarriage - the testing does not give reasons why a miscarriage has occurred nor will it determine the gender of the baby.

There are two types of Molar Pregnancy:

1. A complete mole, where there's a mass of abnormal cells in the womb and no foetus develops or
2. A partial mole, where an abnormal foetus starts to form, but it cannot survive.

Molar Pregnancies can cause the pregnancy hormone in your body to be very high and you may still feel pregnant. If Molar Pregnancy is diagnosed when your pregnancy tissue is examined it allows staff to give you the most appropriate treatment and follow up care in future pregnancies.

Molar pregnancy is a very rare condition and we will only contact you if the examination identifies this condition, or if anything else is found that might affect you.

If you have opted for surgical management of your miscarriage we recommend sending the pregnancy remains for testing. If you have opted for medical management of your miscarriage the health professionals caring for you will check any remains you pass and discuss if they think histopathology testing is advisable with you.

The examination is carried out in the Histopathology Department at The Royal Liverpool University Hospital.

Does This Examination Have To Be Performed?

It is your decision whether or not to allow this examination.

Please be aware that results from histopathology examination rarely identify a cause for your miscarriage. We do not routinely contact you with the results unless they are abnormal and results can take up to 3 months to come through.

After histopathology examination

When **fetal tissue is identified microscopically**, its presence is commented within the pathology report, but as this is embedded in a paraffin block and is part of the diagnostic record, this is not returned unless a patient specifically asks to have the blocks and slides returned.

If no fetal tissue is identified Royal Liverpool University Hospital can make arrangements for respectful disposal of the remaining tissue according to their standard procedure.

When fetal tissue is identified during the examination this is returned to Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust. The Honeysuckle Team will ensure your pregnancy remains are cared for in accordance with your wishes recorded on the care of pregnancy remains consent form.

Should you wish to discuss the care of your pregnancy remains in further detail please contact The Honeysuckle Team.

This leaflet can be made available in different formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk

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