

## Medical management of miscarriage as an outpatient

### Introduction

This information leaflet is designed to provide more information on the process of medical management of miscarriage. More information on all methods of management of miscarriage is available in "Management of your miscarriage" patient information leaflet. Firstly, we would like to offer our sincere condolences for your loss.

After discussion with one of our Doctors, Emergency Nurse Practitioners or Early Pregnancy Unit nurses where all options were explained to you, you have opted to proceed with the medical form of managing your miscarriage.

Please read this information leaflet and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask a member of our team.

### What is medical management of miscarriage?

Medical management of miscarriage is where medications are given to speed up the process of miscarriage.

The treatment consists of two parts; the first part being a single tablet taken orally which will be given to you by one of the nurses whilst you are in the hospital. We call this day 1. This is called Mifepristone and it acts by blocking the hormone progesterone which is important in maintaining early pregnancy. Following this tablet, you may experience some nausea and this medication may cause some bleeding and period type abdominal pain. We will provide you with advice regarding pain relief and a take home prescription if required.

The second part of the treatment will be provided for you to take home and administer 48 hours later, i.e., day 3. It is 4 tablets called Misoprostol. This medication aims to soften the neck of the womb and causes the womb to contract. These are to be placed into the vagina, as high up as you can get them. This is the preferred method of use for these tablets as you will experience fewer side effects this way. If this is not something you are

comfortable with you can place the tablets in your mouth, in between your cheek and gum (2 tablets on each side) and allow these to dissolve. If they have not dissolved in 30 minutes you can swallow what is left with some water.

## **What should I expect at home?**

You will need to take some time off work and make sure you have your partner, friend or relative available for support. If you have young children at home it may be wise to arrange childcare. We would advise you have a supply of large sanitary pads. You can eat and drink as normal.

Usually, you will start to bleed and have period type pains 2-4 hours after taking the Misoprostol tablets. The intensity of the pain will vary; for some women it will be quite mild and others it may be very painful. We will be offered pain relief to take home with you to ensure you have a supply of stronger medication if it is needed. If the pain becomes unbearable at home despite taking this pain relief, you can call the Gynaecology Emergency Department on 0151 702 4140 to see if an attendance to the GED is needed.

The level of bleeding will also vary; we would expect bleeding like a heavy period with some clots of blood to be passed. Usually you will not pass anything that is recognisable as a pregnancy. The bleeding at its heaviest rarely lasts for more than a few hours. If the bleeding does become concerning and you are filling large sanitary pads every half hour for more than an hour then again we would advise you call the **Telephone Triage\* line on 0151 702 4140** for an over the phone assessment to see if an attendance to the hospital for examination is needed.

## **What happens if I don't start to bleed?**

Sometimes the medication will take a little longer to start working. We will call you 48 hours after you have taken the second part i.e. day 5 to assess the level of bleeding you have had and advise what to do next.

## **What happens next?**

A member of staff will ring you after 48 hours to see how you are. We would advise against the use of tampons whilst you are still bleeding as there is a small risk of infection, please continue to use sanitary pads until the bleeding stops. The length of time bleeding lasts will vary; we would expect some bleeding for approximately 2 weeks but this may continue for longer. We would ask you ring the department if the bleeding continues to be heavy or if an offensive smell is noticed from your loss. We would also like to speak to you if at any time you become unwell or notice any fevers / high temperatures.

To ensure the treatment has worked we would ask you perform a home pregnancy test 3 weeks later to ensure this is negative. If at this point the test is positive please call to speak with a member of the team in GED so as a further assessment can be made.

Once a diagnosis of miscarriage has been made, we will complete a notification to inform other departments of your loss. This will enable any appointments for antenatal care to be cancelled.

## Returning to normal

You can return to work when you feel ready and able to. If you feel unable to return straight away then you can complete a self – certificate sick note for 7 days or obtain a note from EPAU, GED or your GP. Letters to confirm our diagnosis and treatment will be sent to them so they are aware of what has happened.

Once the bleeding has stopped it will then vary how long it will take for you normal menstrual cycle to return. Your next period may be a little heavier than normal and your cycles could be a little irregular for a while.

If you are keen to try again for a pregnancy, we would advise you wait until after your next period so you are aware of approximate time of conception which will make things a little easier for the timing of scans and antenatal appointments.

It is quite normal to feel many different emotions during this time and for some time afterwards. We would like to reassure you that our Gynaecology Emergency Department is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for any questions or concerns to be heard. You should have been asked regarding a referral to our Honeysuckle team, a dedicated bereavement team at the Liverpool Women's hospital who can provide support and advice to women and their partners / families following pregnancy loss at any stage of pregnancy. An accompanying leaflet is available with further information about this service is available in our early pregnancy area on the Liverpool Women's Website

### **\*Telephone Triage Service – 0151 702 4140 (please note this line is open 8am – 4pm Monday – Friday)**

If you wish to speak with a member of our Nursing team regarding an acute gynaecological or early pregnancy problem, call 0151 702 4140 where you can receive advice and be triaged according to your concern. Please note this phone line is only available 8am – 4pm Monday to Friday and during high periods of activity delays to the answering of telephone calls may be experienced.

Outside of these hours if you have a medical emergency ring 999, if you have a Gynaecological or early pregnancy Emergency the Gynaecology Emergency Department is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week for urgent walk-in attendance, for all other non-emergencies you can ring 111 or for advice attend a walk in centre or contact your GP'

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