

# Miscarriage

**Miscarriage refers to the situation where an early pregnancy ends unexpectedly. It is a very common complication in early pregnancy. Some women may not even notice that they have ever been pregnant.**

**Twenty to twenty-five out of 100 pregnant women** may experience slight vaginal bleeding in early pregnancy. A proportion of them will be diagnosed as miscarriage but the rest may progress to term.

**Don't worry**, a history of vaginal bleeding in early pregnancy, or which we call threatened miscarriage, will not affect the growth and development of the foetus and will not increase the chance of congenital abnormalities.

## How can a woman know she has a miscarriage?

- Most of the miscarriage occurs from 6 to 12 weeks of pregnancy or earlier.
- Some women may experience some bleeding from the vagina and there may be some pain in the tummy.
- In other women, the content of the uterus may be expelled spontaneously; they may experience more bleeding and pain.
- There are also women who have no symptoms at all and the condition is picked up during check-up.

## Is it common? Why does it happen?

### **Miscarriage is a very common condition.**

- Most miscarriage occurs when the foetus is abnormal or the uterine environment is hostile for the growth of the foetus.
- Some herbs or drugs may affect pregnancy but it is hard to say whether miscarriage is directly caused by these medications since it is a very common phenomenon. Therefore it is important to avoid taking any unnecessary medications or herbs once a woman is aware she is pregnant.
- Miscarriage is not caused by physical activities like swimming, dancing, working out in gymnasium or practising yoga.
- Unless food is contaminated by bacteria, women seldom have miscarriage due to specific food intake.
- Normal sexual activities such as caressing and intercourse are not harmful and will not increase the chance of miscarriage.

## Recurrent Miscarriage

### **Generally speaking, one miscarriage should not predispose a woman to another.**

- Recurrent miscarriage is defined as loss of 3 or more consecutive pregnancies.
- Approximately 1 in 100 women has the problem of recurrent miscarriage.
- A proportion of these women will have a persistent underlying cause for their recurrent pregnancy loss.
- Some of these causes are treatable. Please consult your obstetrician for details.

(This leaflet is prepared by the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority)

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