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*User Reps: V2 Apr 2018*

*Patient Experience Group: Feb 2015, V2 Jul 2018*

**Division of Women, Children & Sexual Health Services**

**How can I help to reduce Healthcare Associated Infections?**

Infection control is important to the wellbeing of our patients, and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the main entrance of the hospital and at the entrance to every clinical area before coming into and after leaving the clinical area or hospital. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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If you require a translation of this leaflet please contact the  
Early Pregnancy Unit

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# Bleeding in early pregnancy

**Information for women  
under 13 weeks of pregnancy**

**Patient Information Leaflet**

If you want this leaflet in another language please call  
01494 425553 or 01296 316469

**Safe & compassionate care,**

**every time**

We understand that you are worried about bleeding in early pregnancy and this leaflet is to help you understand what may be causing it.

### Why am I bleeding?

Vaginal bleeding in the early stages of pregnancy is not unusual and does not always mean there is a problem.

Bleeding can sometimes be a warning sign of miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy and, rarely, a molar pregnancy.

Bleeding can happen at any time after you have missed a period and is often noticed when going to the toilet as a smear of pink, brown or red blood loss on the toilet paper. The blood loss is different for everyone and can be 'spotting' or a gush with clots. The bleeding might happen every day or may be intermittent, sometimes for up to two weeks.

### What are the causes?

We do not always know why the bleeding happens, but in most cases the pregnancy continues safely.

Some likely causes may be:

- **The implantation site** – when the placenta (the organ that provides oxygen and nutrients to your growing baby) tries to 'burrow' into the endometrium (lining of the womb), it may cause some blood vessels to bleed.
- **The cervix (neck of the womb)** – during pregnancy the tissues become soft and rich in blood supply and this may cause bleeding.
- **The vagina** – Thrush or any other infection may cause bleeding from the inflammation.

An ultrasound scan after 6-7 weeks of pregnancy can tell if the pregnancy is progressing normally.

Sometimes the scan may show a small haematoma (blood clot) around the sac that contains your baby and if this is the case you may need a re-scan. If you have any questions please talk to the Early Pregnancy Unit (EPU) nurses when this is arranged.

It is reassuring when the baby's heartbeat can be heard during the scan and this means that there is an 85-97% chance that your pregnancy will continue.

### Do I need follow-up care?

If we can see a blood clot around the pregnancy sac when you have your scan, you may have some further bleeding. You may have another scan in 1-2 weeks. If you have more heavy bleeding with clots, please visit the Accident & Emergency Department or call the EPU clinic during opening hours when you will be assessed and a follow-up plan made.

Often there is no reason for the bleeding, and the symptoms settle without further problems. You can contact the EPU clinic or your GP if you are worried.

### What should I do?

There is no treatment to prevent or stop the bleeding. Bed rest is not recommended but, depending upon the type of work you have, you may wish to take some time off whilst you are actively bleeding.

Please do not use tampons; but instead use sanitary towels or panty liners. This way you will be able to assess the amount of bleeding more easily and reduce the risk of infection.

We advise you not to exercise, swim or have sex until the blood loss has completely stopped.

### Sources of Information

#### Miscarriage Association

17 Wentworth Terrace, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 3QW  
Helpline: 01924 200799 Web: [www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

### Useful contact numbers

#### Stoke Mandeville Hospital

EPU Clinic 0800-1700 Monday-Friday (01296) 316469

**Out of hours:** Ward 16 (01296) 418111 or  
SAU (Surgical Assessment Unit) (01296) 316500/316365

We are always looking for ways to improve the quality of information we give to patients. If you have any comments or suggestions about this booklet, please contact:

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