

# Information for patients and carers

## Medical Management of Miscarriage at Home



## What is medical management of miscarriage?

We are sorry that you are having a miscarriage. Medical management of miscarriage is a treatment that uses medication to speed up the miscarriage process. In some circumstances it is suitable for you to have this treatment at home if you prefer. The aim of this leaflet is to help answer some of the questions that you may have about medical management of miscarriage at home.

## Preparing for medical management at home

- If you have children at home, we recommend that you arrange childcare during the treatment
- It is important to have somebody with you at home for support
- Ensure you have a good supply of large sanitary towels
- Ensure you have a supply of over-the-counter painkillers, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen. The hospital can provide you with a prescription for stronger painkillers to take home if required
- Make sure you have a telephone so that you can call somebody if you need help – a reminder of our 24-hour triage number is at the end of this leaflet

## How do I take the medication?

Your health professional may offer a medication called Mifepristone which you will take in the Gynaecology and Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (GEPAU). This is a tablet you take by mouth. If you take Mifepristone, then you will be given Misoprostol to take at home 48 hours later.

Some patients only require Misoprostol – if so, you can take the medication as soon as you are ready at home.

## **Taking the medication – misoprostol.**

There are two ways to take the Misoprostol:

1. By inserting the tablets into the vagina.
2. By swallowing the tablets orally.

The tablets are most effective if inserted vaginally and may have fewer side effects.

If you choose to insert the tablets into the vagina you should use your fingers to insert them as far into the vagina as possible, the nurse in GEPAU can explain how this is done. We will provide a glove and gel to help with this process.

## **What happens after taking misoprostol?**

- Bleeding normally starts after a few hours as the treatment starts to work. The bleeding can end after 1-2 days or last up to three weeks, but it should gradually get lighter over this time
- Bleeding can be heavy, and you are likely to pass blood clots
- You may see some pregnancy tissue that looks different in appearance to blood clots. This may be whitish grey in appearance. Sometimes there is a recognisable sac, with a tiny baby (fetus) inside
- You are likely to experience strong 'period type' cramping pains for the first 1-2 days
- It is very normal to feel strongly emotional after taking the medication – this is not a side effect, but a normal part of miscarriage
- We ask you to complete a pregnancy test at home after 3 weeks, to ensure that the miscarriage is complete

## Are there any side effects of the medication?

- Pain – most women experience strong cramping pain. These pains are usually strongest whilst the bleeding is heavy and should ease off once the pregnancy tissue has passed. We advise that you use pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen. If you need stronger pain relief such as dihydrocodeine we will prescribe this
- Chills/fever – a common side effect but should not last longer than 24 hours
- Nausea & vomiting – this normally settles within 2-6 hours
- Diarrhoea (loose stool) - should last no longer than 24 hours
- Skin rash – this should disappear within a few days

## When should I call GEPAU?

You can contact GEPAU (**01772524415**) at any time for advice.

Please do contact us in the following circumstances:

- If you feel dizzy, faint or unwell
- If you feel feverish for more than 24 hours
- If you cannot manage the pain after taking painkillers
- If you are worried about very heavy bleeding (clots the size of your palm or soaking sanitary pads every 20 minutes)
- If heavy bleeding goes on for more than 3 days
- If your home pregnancy test is positive after 3 weeks
- If you have vaginal discharge with a bad smell

## What should I do when I pass the pregnancy tissue?

There is no right or wrong answer about what to do with the pregnancy tissue. It is highly likely the tissue will pass when you are on the toilet. Some people will flush the toilet right away, others will want to remove the tissue to see it, and this is an entirely natural thing to do.

Your nurse will explain to you the options for what can be done with the pregnancy tissue. You may wish to bury it at home or arrange a private cremation or burial. You may wish for the hospital to confirm that it is pregnancy tissue and discuss your options for cremation or burial. Unfortunately, in most circumstances, if the tissue is passed at home further testing for histology or genetics cannot be arranged.

## What happens after medical management?

We will contact you 48 hours after you have taken the Misoprostol. This telephone call is to check whether the treatment has been successful or whether you may need further medical review. If you have not been contacted by 17:00 on that day, please contact:  
GEPAU on **01772 524415**.

We advise you to avoid tampons, having sex, baths and going swimming until the bleeding has stopped because of the risk of infection.

We will supply a urine pregnancy test to be performed three weeks after your miscarriage. If the test remains positive you should contact GEPAU.

Please return any unused misoprostol tablets to the pharmacy/chemist or GEPAU for proper disposal. You must not throw them down the toilet or give them to other people.

## Help and support during your treatment

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

**GEPAU (24-hour telephone line): 01772524415**

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware)

<https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/miscarriage/>

<https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/information/leaflets/>

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[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.**

**This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

[patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk)

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