**What causes bleeding in early pregnancy?**

* + There are many causes of vaginal bleeding in early pregnancy
  + Sometimes bleeding is a sign of miscarriage *(early pregnancy loss)*,  
    and sometimes it is not
  + Other causes may include implantation bleeding, cervical bleeding, cervical polyps, subchorionic hematoma, ectopic pregnancy, or infection
  + If your bleeding results in a miscarriage, remember that a miscarriage does not  
    occur because of something that you did. Miscarriage occurs in approximately  
    20% of pregnancies.

**How do I find out the cause of my bleeding?**

* + An ultrasound may be ordered to determine if the pregnancy is developing  
    as expected. This ultrasound may be performed externally *(abdomen)*  
    or internally *(through the vagina)*, and is not dangerous in pregnancy.
  + A blood test *(beta-HCG)* may be obtained and compared to previous and/or  
    future levels to determine if the pregnancy is developing as expected
  + A pelvic exam may be performed so your healthcare provider can look at your cervix

**What are the next steps?**

* + It is usually recommended that you refrain from vigorous exercise or

sexual intercourse until after the visible bleeding has resolved

* + Follow up with your primary healthcare provider or as directed by your ED physician

*Continued on page 2*

**PATIENT HANDOUT**

Bleeding in Early Pregnancy

**1**

***\*\*To print to a PDF, select “Save as PDF” from your printer list choice and save to your documents\*\****

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Additional hospital-specific considerations:** | | |
| *(i.e. add information for early pregnancy loss evaluation clinic in your community*  *and/or add local supports and/or resources)* | | |
| **More Information** | PregnancyED.com (link to PDF)  *“BLEEDING DURING EARLY PREGNANCY”* | A qr code with a black and white background  Description automatically generated |
| Help here | Description here | Website address here |
| Help here | Description here | Website address here |
| Help here | Description here | Website address here |

*Adapted from patient education materials from* [*http://www.pregnancyed.com*](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.pregnancyed.com%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cjburkhart%40toh.ca%7C2449f971ff874a91a23808dc1080762c%7C859b41b6130f4d13a6931ffec4e7cb5a%7C0%7C0%7C638403391133479922%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=nLc9IF7W7pUhOLr9BAk0%2BPQik1zYJYXwcvANtMn%2BwpU%3D&reserved=0)

NOTES:

|  |
| --- |
| **RED FLAGS** |
| **Return to the Emergency Department immediately if you:**   * + Have severe pain in your abdomen   + Have very heavy bleeding *(soaking more than three pads in three hours)* or are passing large clots   + Suddenly feel faint, dizzy, or like you are passing out   + Have chills or a fever higher than 38°C *(100.4°F)* |

Bleeding in Early Pregnancy

**2**