

PATIENT HANDOUT

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

Bleeding in Early Pregnancy

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)

NOTES:

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"	
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>

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