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Spontaneous Abortion Types

The most common complication of early pregnancy, a spontaneous abortion, or miscarriage refers to the death of a fetus or embryo. This is at or before 20 weeks gestation or if the fetus or embryo weights 500g or less. After 20 weeks this termed stillbirth.



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Missed Abortion

Missing the Abort-button

A scenario where the fetus or embryo is no longer viable but remains in the uterus. There is often an abnormal ultrasound without bleeding or cervical dilation.

No Fetal Heartbeat, No Cervical Dilation, No Bleeding

No Heart-timer, Closed Cervix, and No Blood on pad

There is often an abnormal ultrasound showing no fetal heartbeat. Patients are without vaginal bleeding and the cervix will not be dilated. Evacuation of the uterine contents by D/C is typically done after 16 weeks.

Threatened Abortion

Threatening the Abort-button

Patients present with minimal vaginal bleeding before 20th week. 25-50% of these pregnancies end in miscarriage. Vaginal exam will not show dilation of the cervical os. Most pregnancies are able to be carried to term with varying treatments including bed rest, sexual abstinence and progestins as well as close observation with weekly pelvic exams.

No Cervical Dilation and Minimal Bleeding

Closed Cervix with Minimal Blood

Patients present with minimal vaginal bleeding before 20th week. 25-50% of these pregnancies end in miscarriage. Vaginal exam will not show dilation of the cervical os. Most pregnancies are able to be carried to term with varying treatments including bed rest, sexual abstinence and progestins as well as close observation with weekly pelvic exams.

Inevitable Abortion

Inevitable-countdown Abort-button

Vaginal bleeding and cramping abdominal pain are present with dilation of the cervical os which leads to the eventual passage of uterine contents without treatment. Bleeding and pain will resolve once uterine evacuation is complete.

Bleeding and Cervical Dilation with No Loss of Products of Conception

Blood from Dyed-dilation Cervix with No Loss of Product

Vaginal bleeding and cramping abdominal pain are present with dilation of the cervical os which leads to the eventual passage of uterine contents without treatment. Bleeding and pain will resolve once uterine evacuation is complete.

Incomplete Abortion

Incomplete Abort-button

Vaginal bleeding and cramping abdominal pain with loss of only a portion of the products of conception. Partial loss often requires surgical removal of the remaining uterine contents to prevent infection and irritation.

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Bleeding and Cervical Dilation with Loss of Some Products of Conception

Blood From Dyed-dilation Cervix Losing Part of Product

Vaginal bleeding and cramping abdominal pain with loss of only a portion of the products of conception. Partial loss often requires surgical removal of the remaining uterine contents to prevent infection and irritation.

Complete Abortion

Complete Abort-button

Vaginal bleeding, abdominal pain with no cervical dilation which leads to a loss of all products of conception. Emotional support is often needed for the patient and family.

Bleeding with No Cervical Dilation, with Loss of All Products of Conception

Blood from Closed Cervix with Complete Loss of Product

Vaginal bleeding, abdominal pain with no cervical dilation which leads to a loss of all products of conception. Emotional support is often needed for the patient and family.