

Signs

Miscarriage

- [Signs](#)
- [Causes](#)
- [Confirming a miscarriage](#)
- [Managing a miscarriage](#)
- [After a miscarriage](#)
- [Reducing your risk](#)
- [Recurrent](#)

A miscarriage is the loss of a pregnancy before 24 weeks.

Stillbirth is the name given to pregnancy loss after 24 weeks.

Miscarriages are very common. Almost 1 in 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage, 3 in 4 do not.

Early miscarriages happen in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy (first trimester). Most happen before 10 weeks.

Late miscarriages happen between 12 and 24 weeks (second trimester). They are not common and are often unexpected.

Contact your GP, maternity unit or hospital urgently if you have:

- [heavy bleeding from your vagina](#)
- [severe stomach pain](#)

Contact a GP out-of-hours service or emergency department if you have symptoms outside of normal clinic hours. Do not wait until the next day to get advice.

 [Find urgent and emergency care](#)

Signs you may have

The most common signs of a miscarriage are:

- bleeding from your vagina
- stomach cramps and pain

You can have a miscarriage without having any signs or symptoms. This is sometimes called a [missed miscarriage](#).

Bleeding from your vagina

There are lots of reasons why you might have vaginal bleeding during pregnancy. Spotting or light bleeding is common during the first 12 weeks (first trimester). It does not mean you are having a miscarriage.

Bleeding in pregnancy may be:

- light pink spotting
- brown vaginal discharge
- bright red and heavy - with or without clots

Heavy bleeding is when you need to change a sanitary towel with blood clots every 15 minutes for more than an hour.

Contact your GP, maternity unit or hospital urgently if:

- you have heavy bleeding

If you have very heavy bleeding, you may need to be admitted to hospital.

Use sanitary towels and not tampons. This will reduce the risk of infection.

Sometimes bleeding from the vagina in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy can be a sign of a [threatened miscarriage](#).

Stomach cramps and pain

Stomach pain can happen for different reasons during pregnancy. Sometimes it is a sign of a miscarriage. The type of pain varies.

The pain can be:

- a dull ache
- cramping, like strong period pain
- severe, and not eased by painkillers

You might also have some dizziness due to the pain and bleeding.

Contact your GP, maternity unit or hospital urgently if:

- you have severe stomach pain that does not go away

Your waters break (late miscarriage)

In a late miscarriage (12 to 24 weeks), sometimes your waters break. This is when the amniotic fluid that surrounds your baby drains from your body.

Contact your GP, midwife, maternity unit or hospital urgently if:

- your waters break or leaks from around your baby

You will need hospital care.

No signs (missed miscarriage)

You can have a miscarriage without having any signs or symptoms. You might only find out you had a miscarriage during an ultrasound scan.

In early pregnancy this is called a missed miscarriage.

If you can, bring your partner or a friend to every scan for support.

Threatened miscarriage

A threatened miscarriage is when you have vaginal bleeding and sometimes stomach pain. But an examination and ultrasound confirm that your pregnancy is OK.

The hospital staff will tell you what to do if you have further bleeding.

Contact your GP, midwife, maternity unit or hospital at any time in your pregnancy if:

- you are worried about miscarriage but are not sure if you have symptoms

They can give you advice and support.

Sláintecare.

This project has received funding from the Government of Ireland's Sláintecare Integration Fund 2019 under Grant Agreement Number 8.

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