

MISCARRIAGE
ASSOCIATION

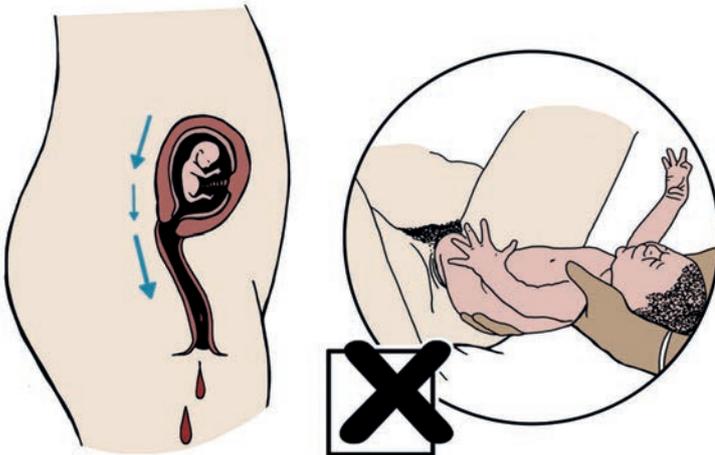
The knowledge to help



Miscarriage

Information booklet

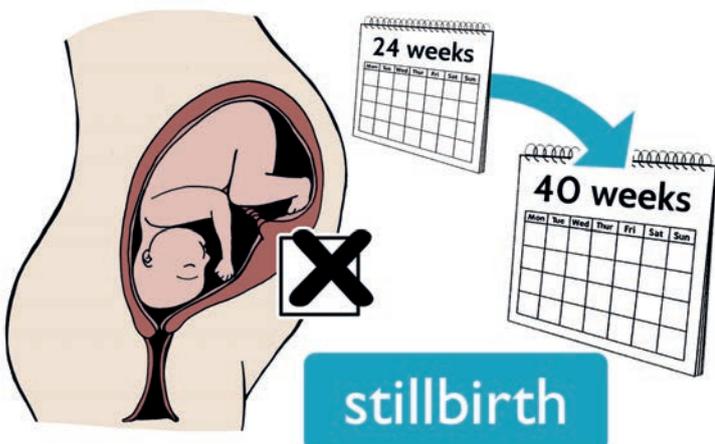
What is a miscarriage?



A miscarriage is when a woman is pregnant, but the baby dies inside her a long time before it is ready to be born.



Pregnancy usually lasts for about 40 weeks. If the baby dies before you have been pregnant for 24 weeks, it is called a miscarriage.

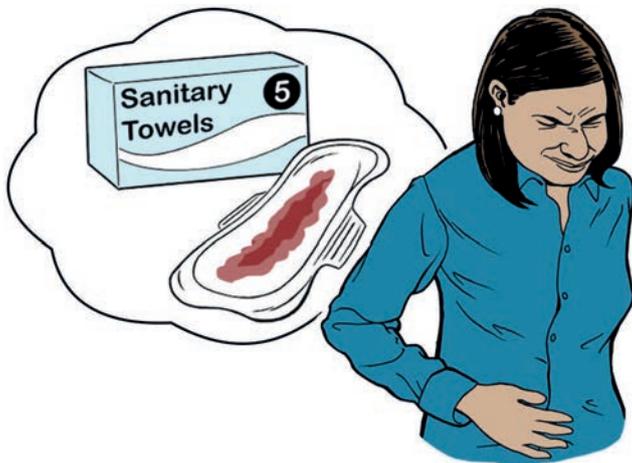


If the baby dies after you have been pregnant for 24 weeks, or when you give birth, that's called a stillbirth.



This leaflet just talks about miscarriage.

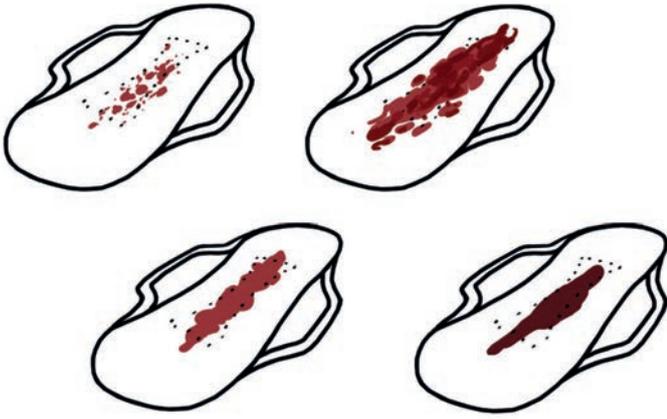
How do you know if you are having a miscarriage?



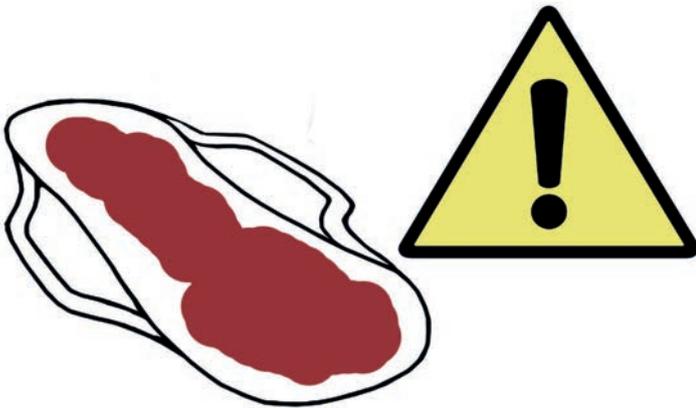
If you are pregnant and you have bleeding from your vagina, you might be having a miscarriage.



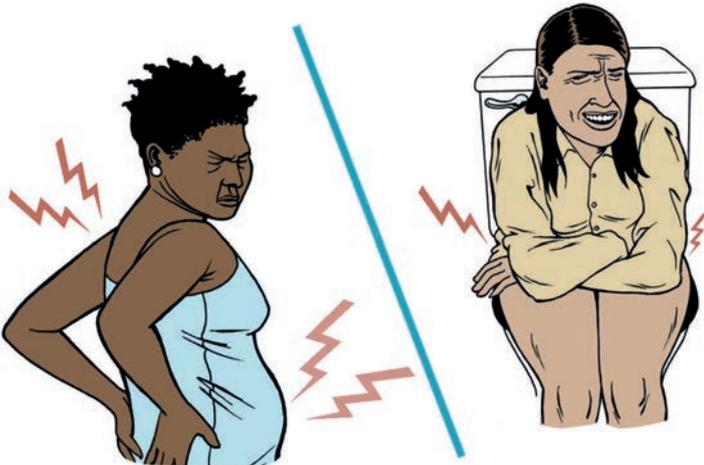
The bleeding might be like a period, or it might be a bit like a period, but different.



The bleeding might be bright red, or dark red. It might be like little spots of blood, or stringy bits, or maybe lumps of blood, which might be the size of a plum or even slightly bigger.



The bleeding might be really heavy – lots more blood than when you have your period.

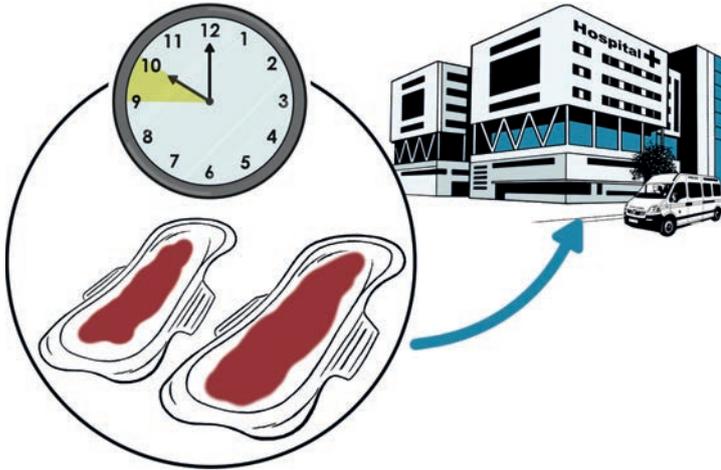


If you are pregnant and you have pain in your tummy or your shoulders, or when you poo, you might be having a miscarriage, especially if you have some bleeding too.

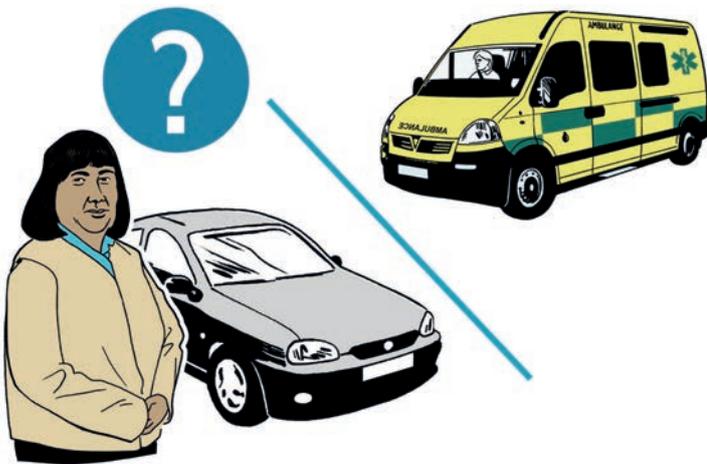


The pain in your tummy might be really bad – worse than when you have your period.

What should I do?



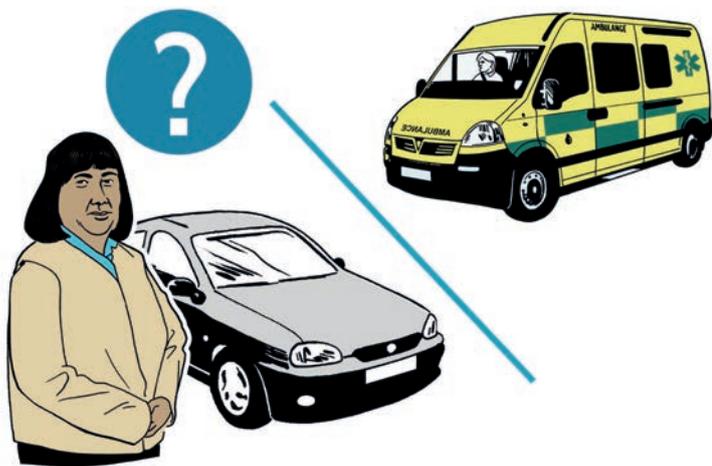
If you have to change your pad more than once an hour because of bleeding, it is best to go to the Accident and Emergency department at your hospital.



See if somebody can take you there or if not, call an ambulance.



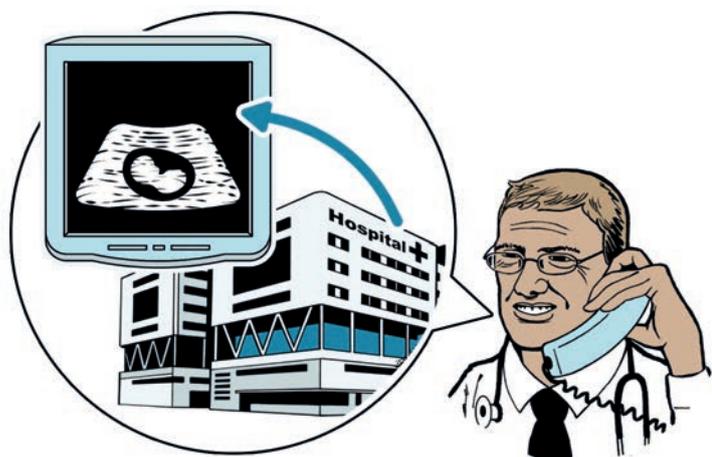
If the pain is very bad and you need help straight away, it is best to go to the Accident and Emergency department at your hospital.



See if somebody can take you there or if not, call an ambulance.

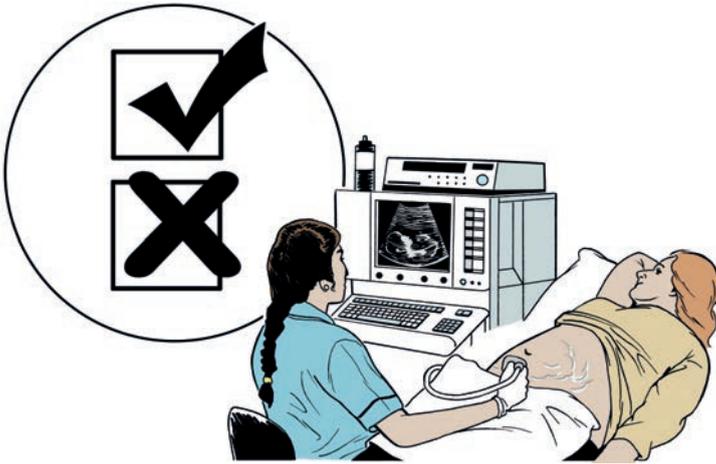


If you are okay but you are worried that you might be having a miscarriage, it is best to phone your doctor or your midwife.



They will ask you some questions and they might send you to hospital for a scan.

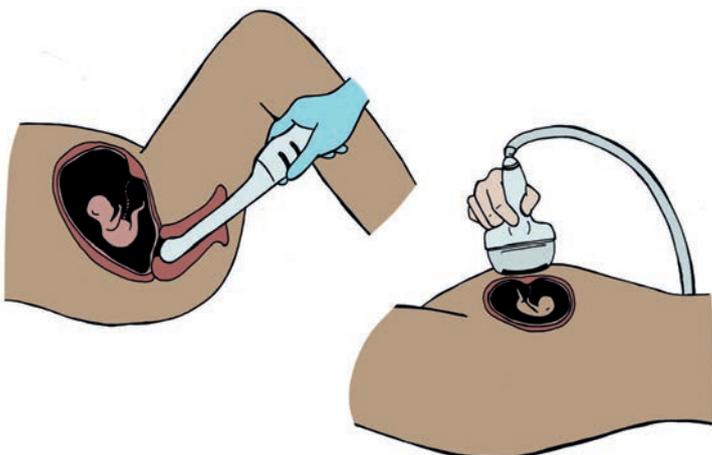
What is a scan?



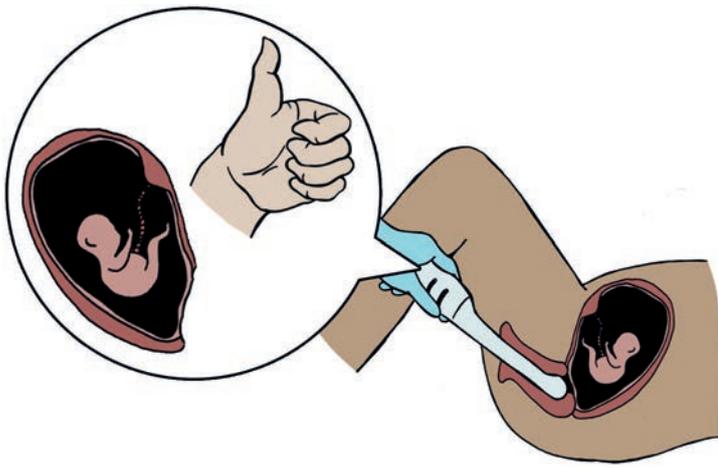
A scan is an examination that can show a picture of the inside of your tummy (your womb) where the baby grows, to see if the baby is okay.



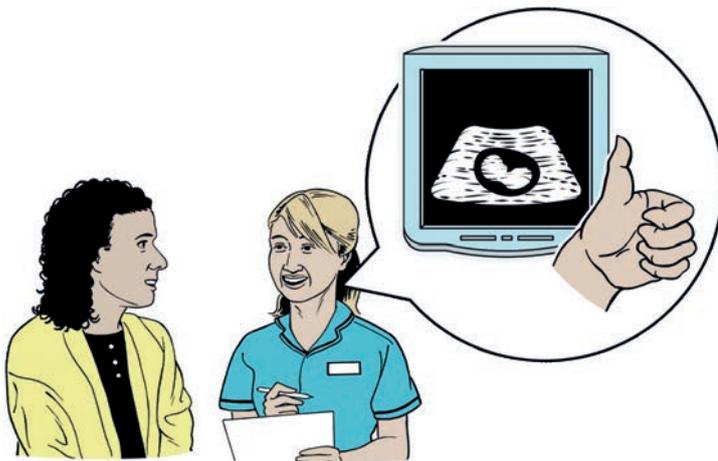
It is not like a normal photo – more like a video with lots of wavy lines.



Sometimes, the scan is done on your tummy. Sometimes it is done by putting a probe (like a very thick pen) into your vagina.

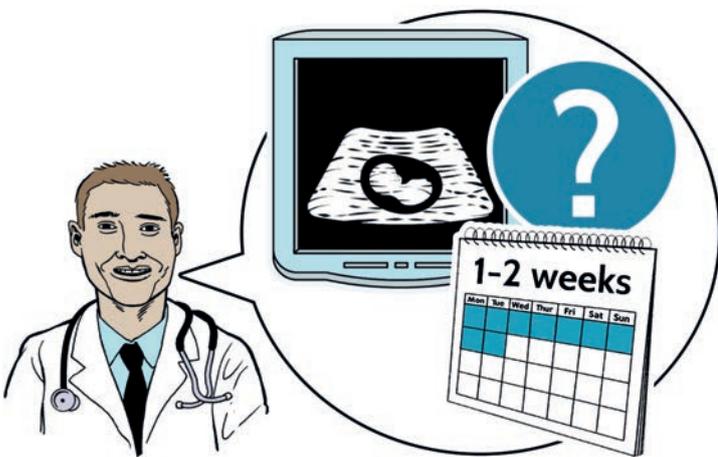


It might be uncomfortable or hurt a bit, or it might just feel a bit weird, but it won't harm your baby.



The doctor or nurse will tell you what the scan shows.

- They might say that the baby is fine and you can go home.

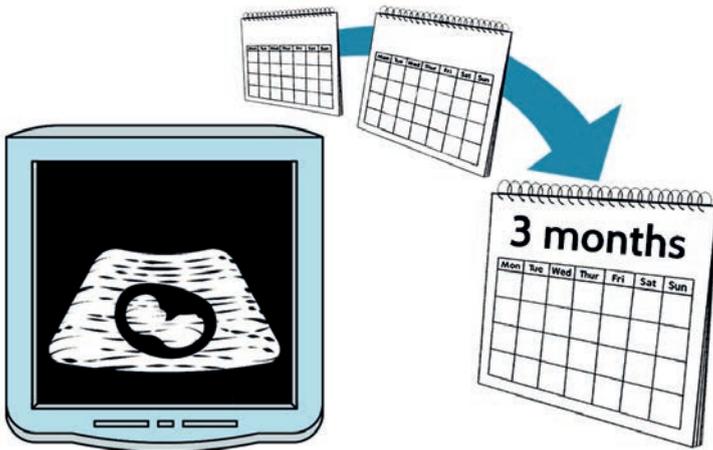


- They might say that they are not sure if the baby is okay or not, and ask you to come back again for another scan in a week or two.

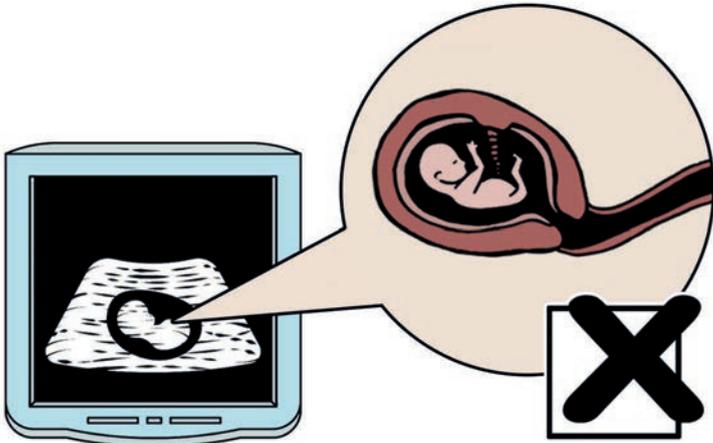


- They might say that the baby is not okay and that you are having a miscarriage. They will talk to you about what happens next.

A 'missed' miscarriage



If you are pregnant, you will have an appointment at the hospital when you are three months pregnant to check if everything is okay. It can be an exciting time.



But the scan might show that your baby has died, even though you didn't have any bleeding or any pain.



That's called a missed miscarriage because nobody noticed it had happened. This is not anyone's fault.



The doctor or nurse will talk to you about what happens next.

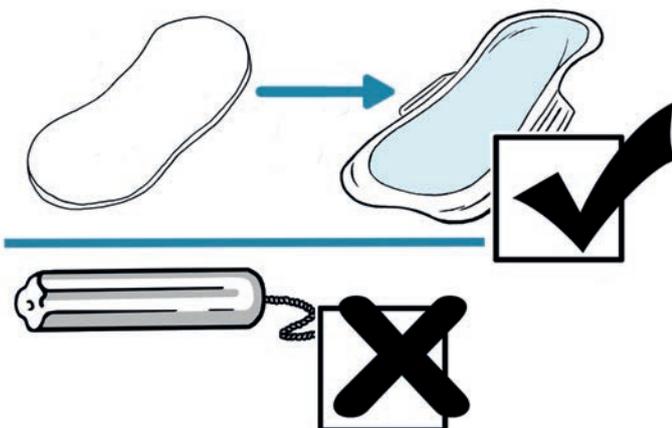
What might happen next?

A natural miscarriage

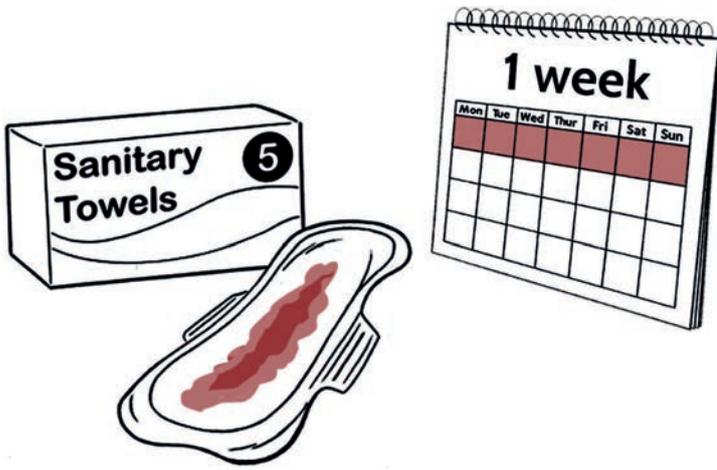


You might have a natural miscarriage. If so:

- You will probably have a lot of blood and clots coming from your vagina.



- You will need to use bigger pads than usual. Don't use tampons.



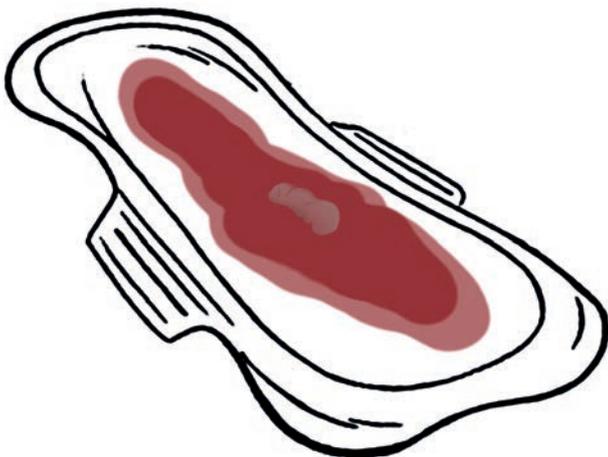
- The bleeding might last for a few days or a week or longer.



- It might hurt a lot and you may need something for the pain.



- It is really important to ask for help if you need it.



- You might see something that looks a bit like a tiny baby.

Or

An operation



You might have an operation to take away anything left in your womb.



If this happens, you will have an anaesthetic. This might be an injection that makes you sleep, or one where you stay awake but should not feel anything.



This is a short operation and once finished the miscarriage will be over.



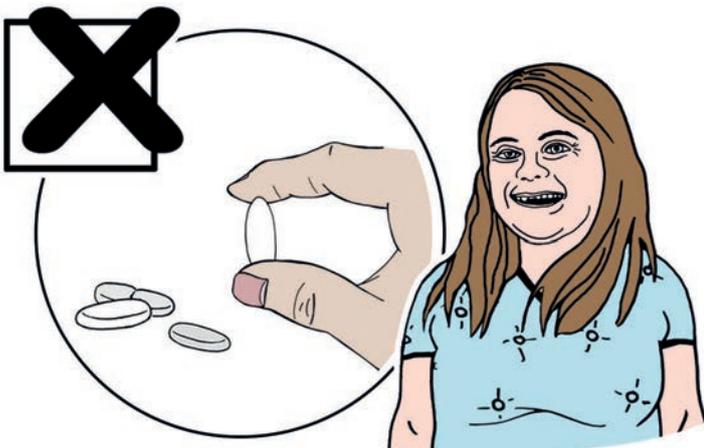
- You might still have some bleeding like a light period for a few days.

Or

Pills or pessaries



You might be given some tablets to take or some pessaries, which are tablets that you put into your vagina. These will help the miscarriage finish. If so, that will be like having a natural miscarriage.

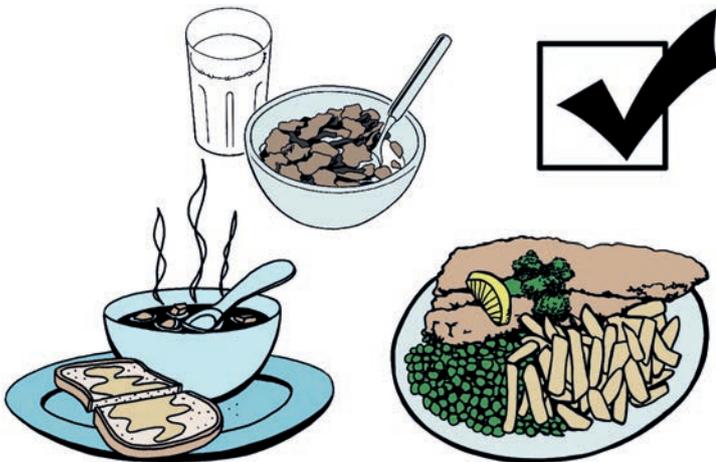


This treatment is called medical management. Your nurse or doctor will talk to you to help you decide what treatment is best for you.

Getting better



You might feel very tired after your miscarriage. It is important to rest when you want to.



Foods like red meat and dark green vegetables are good but the most important thing is to eat regularly.

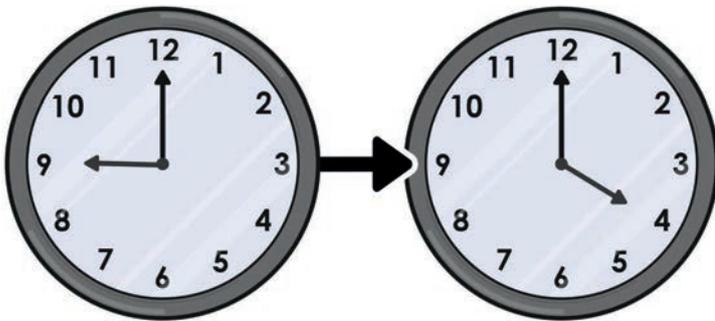


You might feel very sad after your miscarriage. It can help to talk to people you trust, and tell them how you are feeling.



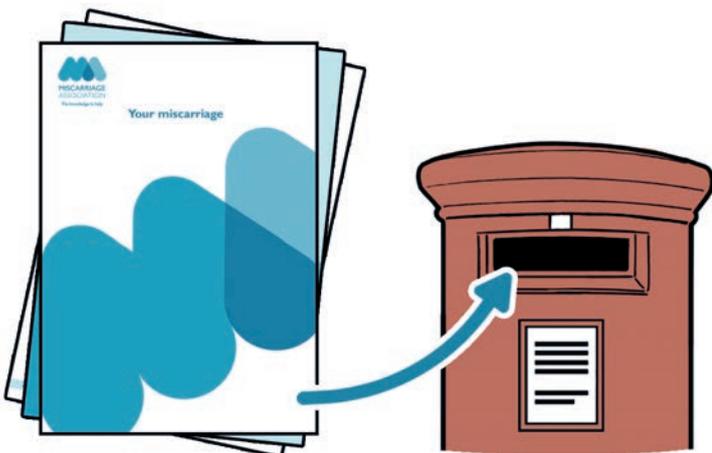
If you like, you can phone the Miscarriage Association and talk to us. Our telephone number is **0303 003 6464**.

Monday → **Friday**

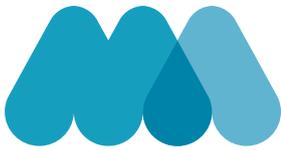


Our helpline is open from 9 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 9 in the morning to 8 at night on Wednesdays and Fridays. We will always be happy to help.

More information



We have another leaflet called 'Your miscarriage'. It has more information in it than this leaflet. We can send you a copy if you like or you can download one on our website.



MISCARRIAGE
ASSOCIATION

The knowledge to help

The Miscarriage Association

Telephone: 0303 003 6464

email: info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Text © The Miscarriage Association March 2026

Registered Charity Number 1076829 (England & Wales) SC039790 (Scotland)

A company limited by guarantee, number 3779123

Registered in England and Wales

Illustration © CHANGE

www.changepeople.org

