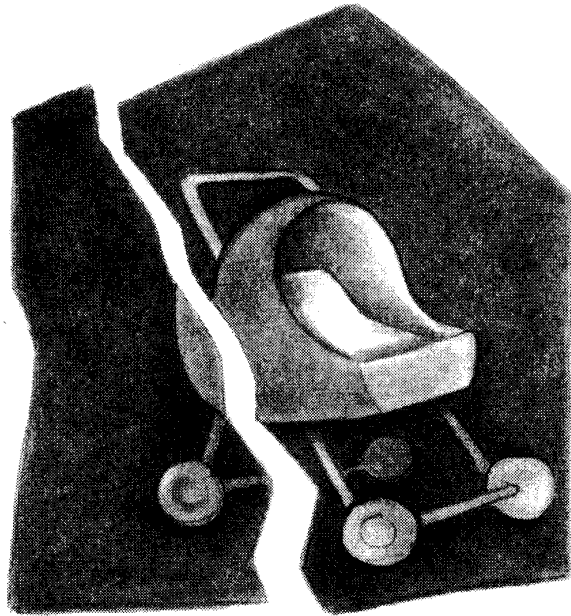




Miscarriage

If you're pregnant and experience bleeding or cramping, it's important that you call your doctor immediately. You may be experiencing a miscarriage. A miscarriage usually doesn't result from picking up something heavy or feeling anxiety. Miscarriage occurs when the fetus doesn't properly develop for a variety of reasons.



What You Should Know

- Miscarriage occurs most often before the 12th week of pregnancy.
- A miscarriage is rarely dangerous to the mother.
- Most women who experience miscarriages eventually conceive again and give birth to healthy babies.
- Early prenatal visits can detect the rare instance when cells begin to form but no fetus develops. The cells remain in the uterus with no signs of bleeding or cramping. When this happens, a surgical procedure is performed to remove the cells and surrounding tissue.
- Occasionally, after a miscarriage has occurred, some tissue is left in the uterus and must be surgically removed. The common surgical procedure is called dilatation and curettage (D and C) or surgical scraping.

Reasons for Miscarriage

- a structural problem in the uterus
- the embryo fails to attach itself to the lining of the uterus
- the mother has been exposed to lead or radiation
- heavy smoking or drinking
- poor diet
- drug use, particularly cocaine
- hormonal imbalance
- sexually transmitted diseases
- other diseases such as diabetes
- infection

Trying Again

The length of time you should wait to become pregnant may be different for each woman. Three months is the standard suggested waiting period. This gives you time to grieve and your body time to return to normal. Waiting at least one full cycle makes it easier for your doctor to pinpoint a due date on the next pregnancy. However, if you're

over 35, suffering from infertility or have miscarried before, your doctor may suggest trying again immediately. The amount of time you take needs to be a decision you make based on your doctor's advice and what feels right to you. Even women with repeated miscarriages (defined as three or more in a row) have a 70 to 85 percent chance of eventually carrying a pregnancy to term.

Take Time to Grieve

It's important after you experience a miscarriage to allow yourself time to grieve. Although the baby didn't develop, it's still a loss. Taking care of your emotional health is as important as caring for your body while it recovers. Seek out someone to talk to: a friend or relative who has also experienced a miscarriage. Your doctor or therapist can help you, too.