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Early pregnancy bleeding: what you should know

Seeing blood in early pregnancy can be frightening. It is important to know that light spotting or mild bleeding during the first trimester is common. In many cases, it does not mean miscarriage (pregnancy loss).

Light bleeding can happen when the fertilized egg attaches to the uterus, which is called implantation. It can also occur because the cervix becomes more sensitive and has more blood flow during pregnancy. After intercourse or a pelvic exam, some spotting may occur.



However, bleeding in early pregnancy can sometimes be a sign of miscarriage. Miscarriage is most common in the first trimester and often cannot be prevented. Bleeding may also be a sign of ectopic pregnancy, which happens when the pregnancy develops outside the uterus. An ectopic pregnancy can be serious and requires urgent medical care.

Please seek emergency care right away if you have heavy bleeding (soaking through a pad each hour for 2 or more hours), strong lower abdominal pain, fever, chills, dizziness, or if you feel faint. These symptoms need urgent evaluation. Even light bleeding should be reported.

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