



Vaginal Bleeding in Pregnancy

First Trimester (up to 12 weeks)

The first trimester is the most common time for bleeding to occur in pregnancy. First trimester bleeding occurs in up to 25% of pregnancies. Miscarriage is often a concern of pregnant women who experience bleeding. About half of the women who experience bleeding in the first trimester will miscarry, the other half go on to have healthy pregnancies. Some not-so-serious causes of bleeding include: cervical trauma when the cervix is disrupted such as during or after sex or a pelvic exam. Implantation bleeding is another not-so-serious cause of bleeding and happens as the placenta attaches or imbeds into the uterine wall. Other more serious reasons, which may require medical attention include: miscarriage, infections, or an ectopic pregnancy.

When to contact the midwife: If the bleeding is light, or simply spotting and goes away within a day you can mention it at your next prenatal appointment. **Contact your midwife right away if the bleeding lasts more than one day, picks up, becomes moderate to heavy, any clots or tissue are passed, or you experience abdominal pain, cramping, fever or chills.**

Second and Third Trimesters (13 – 40 weeks)

Bleeding occurring in the second or third trimesters is not as common as occurring in the first. Bleeding occurring at this point in pregnancy should be reported to the midwife without delay. Source or reason for the bleeding should be determined. Causes such as miscarriage, infection, placental or cervical origins (some quite serious), and preterm labor need to be considered. Depending on the cause, medical attention may be needed, and rarely delivery of the baby may need necessary. If medical attention is required it does not always have to continue through the pregnancy. In the second or third trimesters there are also not-so-serious causes of bleeding that can occur, many times involving the cervix such as cervical trauma or polyps.

When to contact the midwife: **All bleeding in the second or third trimesters should be reported to the midwife right away.** She can help determine the best treatment and next step. **Call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest hospital if there is severe bleeding or you feel as though your life or the life of your baby is in danger.**

If you are bleeding ...

- ❖ *Always wear a pad or panty liner.* This way you can monitor how much you are bleeding and what type of bleeding is occurring. Note if the blood is brown, pink, red, or purple and if it's smooth or has clots to it.
- ❖ *Do not have sex, wear a tampon, or douche.* Do not introduce anything into the vaginal area.

References

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