

FTWW

FAIR TREATMENT FOR
THE WOMEN OF WALES

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FTWW's Miscarriage Pocket Book

**FTWW IS THE ONLY PATIENT-LED ORGANISATION IN WALES
DEDICATED SOLELY TO WOMEN'S HEALTH EQUALITY**

Miscarriage isn't something we hear spoken about too often, so there can be a lot of misunderstanding around what to expect. **FTWW's Miscarriage Pocket Book** aims to answer your questions and help you to feel less alone at this difficult time

✗ *What is a miscarriage?*

✓ A miscarriage is an unplanned ending of a pregnancy before the baby reaches the point at which it could survive on its own. This includes all pregnancy losses from the time of conception until 24 weeks' gestation.

It's thought that around 1 in 5 women will experience a miscarriage, whereas 1 in 100 will suffer recurrent miscarriages (that is 3 or more in a row).

✗ *Can exercise / having sex bring on a miscarriage?*

✓ It's extremely unlikely that anything you've done has caused your miscarriage. Sex is completely safe during pregnancy, as is moderate exercise.

✗ *I'm pregnant and bleeding - could I be having a miscarriage?*

✓ Not necessarily...Many women experience pain or bleeding in early pregnancy and go on to have a perfectly normal pregnancy.

Having said that, it is VERY important that any pain and bleeding is investigated by a medical professional.

✗ *Should I go to A&E?*

- ✓ Call 999, or go straight to A&E, if you experience a combination of any of the following:
 - A sharp, sudden and intense pain in your belly
 - Feeling very dizzy or fainting
 - Feeling sick
 - Looking very pale

If your symptoms are much milder, then you may prefer to contact your GP or Out of Hours Doctor who will refer you to your nearest EPU (Early Pregnancy Unit).

✗ *I went to the hospital – nobody really had time for me...*

- ✓ A&E can be a frantic, busy place. However, you should be treated with respect and sensitivity. You should certainly expect this in an EPU, and National (NICE) guidelines have been issued which emphasise this.

✗ *Why am I so upset?*

- ✓ Miscarriage can cause a whole host of complex emotions. Some women will suffer from extreme grief and anxiety whilst others won't. Feelings of relief aren't uncommon, especially if your personal circumstances mean that having a baby would be difficult.

The key thing to remember is that there is no 'normal' or 'right' way to feel. If you're struggling, then it's really important that you seek help from your GP.

✗ *Can I go straight back to my normal activities?*

- ✓ Many women feel physically able to go back to their normal routine very soon after a miscarriage. Some even continue with their usual activities throughout, perhaps because they didn't feel able to tell others about the situation.

The emotional impact can take much longer to deal with – and that's perfectly OK too. If you are able to talk to others, you may be surprised by how supportive they are.

✗ *'Just try again'?*

- ✓ Unless you are advised otherwise by your doctor or EPU, then, sure, you're usually physically fine to try again as soon as your period returns. However, well-meaning advice like this isn't always helpful if your loss has caused you a lot of suffering. It's very important that you feel ready, both emotionally as well as physically.

✗ *Should I tell other people?*

- ✓ Many people find it comforting to share their news with those close to them. For others, it's simply too private to share, or they may feel it's not important enough to warrant it. Some may want to talk publicly and have the existence of their baby widely acknowledged. In short, it's totally your call.

✘ Will I keep having miscarriages?

✓ The vast majority of miscarriages are one-offs, and it's unlikely that you'll ever know the cause. Fortunately, you're extremely likely to go on and have a normal, healthy pregnancy next time.

Only 1% of women will experience recurrent miscarriages but, if you do, you should be offered a referral to a gynaecologist who will carry out tests to try and establish an underlying cause and recommend a treatment plan.

Sadly, in Wales, there are currently no dedicated recurrent miscarriage clinics. This is something that FTWW is campaigning to change.

You can find us at www.ftww.co.uk or on Facebook.

Other useful links:

<https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk>

<https://www.tommys.org>

<https://uterusmonologues.com/author/uterusmonologues/>

WE'RE NOT 'MAD', WE JUST WANT 'EVEN'!



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