

Patient information

Surgical management of miscarriage / ERPC

This is an operation to remove the pregnancy tissue and is carried out under a general anaesthetic which puts you to sleep. This used to be called ERPC or ERPoC, which stands for Evacuation of Retained Products of Conception. You might hear it called a D&C which means dilatation and curettage but that is a slightly different procedure usually carried out for women with period problems.

With this method you will be given a date for the procedure. You will come into hospital, having had no food or drink from midnight. You can continue to sip clear water till you come into the ward at 06.30am (in the morning).

A tablet is given to soften the cervix (neck of the womb) to make the procedure easier. In theatre you are given an anaesthetic and the procedure is carried out. When you wake up, you will have some abdominal cramps and bleeding. If all goes well, you will be discharged on the same day.

If the bleeding has not eased in a week or if the discharge is smelly please contact us or your own doctor as these could be signs of an infection which will then need a course of antibiotics.

Currently at the West Suffolk Hospital it is not always possible to book your surgical procedure on elective operating lists (planned lists) so your operation will be added to the emergency theatre list. The department always tries to carry out your procedure at the beginning of the morning but if there are more urgent cases the time for your procedure can be delayed and on occasion may be cancelled until the following morning.

What are the risks?

About 2 - 3 women in every 100 get an infection

Rarely – less than 1 in 200 cases – the operation can perforate (make a hole) the womb and this may cause damage to other organs (bladder, bowel, blood vessels)

Haemorrhage (extremely heavy bleeding) and scarring (adhesions) on the lining of the womb are also rare – less than 1 in 200

Very occasionally some pregnancy tissue remains in the uterus and a second operation is needed to remove it

Very rarely the general anaesthetic can cause a severe allergic reaction (about 1 in 10 000 cases) or even death (fewer than 1 in 100 000 cases)

Very rarely (less than 1 in 30 000 cases) it can result in a hysterectomy; this would only be if there is uncontrollable bleeding or severe damage to the womb.

What are the benefits?

With surgical management you are given a date to come in for the procedure and can plan around that.

With a general anaesthetic you will not be aware of what's going on.

It may be a relief when the miscarriage is 'over and done with' and you can move on.

What are the disadvantages?

Some women are frightened of anaesthetics, surgery and staying in hospital. Some prefer to let nature take its course and to remain aware of the miscarriage process.

The anaesthetic might make you feel groggy or unwell for a few days.

What happens with any pregnancy tissue removed during surgery?

Prior to going to theatre, the ward staff will discuss the options available to you for what can happen with any pregnancy tissue that is removed. This is an individual choice and for some women, not wishing to know anything is fine, whereas others will want to know more. The hospital can arrange for this to be done sensitively with a woodland burial, which occurs once a month. However, should you wish to make your own arrangements you can do so. For example, you might want to consider taking your pregnancy tissue home and burying it in the garden or in a pot with flowers. Or you might prefer to organise a cremation and our team in the Bereavement Office could help support you with this. Whatever your thoughts, should you need any help or assistance once you have left the ward, then the

Bereavement Office who are available on 01284 713410 would be happy to discuss and support you, in what can be a very distressing and difficult decision.

Useful contact numbers

Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (EPAU) 01284 713143
Monday to Friday 09.00am to 4.00 pm

F14 Gynaecology Ward 01284 713235 and 01284 713236

Useful reading

Leaflets from the Miscarriage Association: *Management of miscarriage: your options.*

Patient information from the National Institute of Health and Clinical Care (NICE): *Ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage: diagnosis and initial management*, Published December 2012.

Thank you for reading this leaflet, should you wish to provide us with feedback on any part of your experience please email EPAUuserfeedback@wsh.nhs.uk

Please note this email is NO REPLY and is not checked regularly. Should you have a medical emergency please seek alternative medical advice or attend A&E if required.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)

<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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