

## Discharge Teaching for Patients Experiencing an Early Pregnancy Loss

Topic	Explanation
<b>Physical Well-Being</b>	
<b>Vaginal Bleeding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will probably still have vaginal bleeding, similar to a heavy menstrual period. This will slow down over the next 7 days. Most women will experience some bleeding or spotting for up to 3 weeks.</li> <li>• While bleeding, you should only use sanitary pads (<b>not</b> tampons), and you should also avoid having a bath (showers are acceptable), douching, swimming, or having sexual intercourse.</li> </ul>
<b>Menstruation/ Family Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can expect a normal menstrual period 4 to 8 weeks after a pregnancy loss. Talk to your healthcare provider if this does not occur.</li> <li>• It is possible to become pregnant immediately after a pregnancy loss, even before your menstrual period has returned. You should use some form of birth control (e.g., pill, condoms, intrauterine device) during this time.</li> <li>• It may be advisable to wait a few months before another pregnancy. Discuss this with your healthcare provider.</li> </ul>
<b>Breast Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After a pregnancy loss, your breasts may still produce milk.</li> <li>• If you experience breast discomfort:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wear a well-fitting bra with good support.</li> <li>○ Apply cold compresses for comfort.</li> <li>○ Take warm showers to help the milk drip out.</li> <li>○ If your breasts feel very full, you may hand express a small amount of milk from your breasts. Expressing a spoonful or two will not increase your milk production, and may help you be more comfortable.</li> <li>○ Fullness should decrease over the next 3 to 4 days.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>When to Seek Immediate Medical Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult your healthcare provider or go to the nearest Emergency Department <b>immediately</b> if you:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Suddenly have severe pain in your abdomen that is not controlled by pain medication.</li> <li>○ Suddenly feel faint or feel like passing out.</li> <li>○ Have very heavy bleeding (soaking more than 3 sanitary pads in 3 hours).</li> <li>○ Have chills or a fever greater than 38°C.</li> <li>○ Have foul smelling vaginal discharge.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Psychological Well-Being</b>	
<b>Getting Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and friends want to do the right thing but often are unsure of how to help or what to say. Let them know how you feel and what you need at this time.</li> <li>• If you feel you need someone to talk to, there are skilled people in your community. Discuss a referral with your healthcare provider.</li> <li>• A hospital social worker or spiritual care provider may also be available to help.</li> </ul>
<b>Grieving and Remembering Your Baby</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to allow yourself to grieve the loss of this pregnancy.</li> <li>• There is no right way to feel after a pregnancy loss.</li> <li>• The experience of grief is powerful and you may feel physically and emotionally drained.</li> <li>• Remember that by grieving you are helping yourself heal.</li> <li>• You may find that planning for the future is difficult during this time.</li> <li>• Some parents have found the following things helpful to provide comfort and begin healing:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take care of yourself</li> <li>○ Take time to be with your partner</li> <li>○ Take time to cry and to grieve</li> <li>○ Take a break from your regular schedule</li> <li>○ Make a memento box or scrap box to commemorate your baby and the pregnancy experience</li> <li>○ Write a poem or letter to your baby or about your baby</li> <li>○ Keep a diary about your experience</li> <li>○ Name your baby</li> <li>○ Have a ceremony to recognize your baby</li> <li>○ Light a candle</li> <li>○ Plant a tree or make a memorial garden</li> <li>○ Talk to family, friends, religious leaders, or healthcare providers</li> <li>○ Talk to families that have had a similar experience</li> <li>○ Attend a bereavement support group, such as through PAIL Network</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Adapted from BC Women’s Early Pregnancy Clinic, 2014; <sup>51</sup> Nova Scotia Health Authority; <sup>52</sup> Pregnancy and Infant Loss (PAIL) Network, 2015; <sup>53</sup> Trillium Health Partners. <sup>54</sup>	

For more information, please refer to the complete report by visiting our website:  
<http://www.pcmch.on.ca>



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