



Bleeding during Pregnancy

Bleeding or spotting may occur in 30-40% of pregnancies and is called a threatened miscarriage. Though bleeding is common, it is still of concern to both the patient and the physician and the cause should be investigated. Of patients that have early bleeding, 50% have a normal pregnancy and 50% have a miscarriage. The viability of the pregnancy can be determined using a vaginal ultrasound. Blood tests can measure quantitative HCGs to see if the pregnancy is growing normally.

The usual cause of a miscarriage is a chromosomal defect in the fetus. Miscarrying is the body's way of dealing with an abnormal pregnancy.

Ectopic pregnancies (pregnancies outside the uterus) can also present as an early pregnancy with bleeding.

Most cases of heavy bleeding in the 2nd or 3rd trimester are caused by placental problems. These include a placental previa where the placenta covers part or all of the cervix or a placental abruption (a separation of the placenta from the uterine wall). Both of these conditions can be obstetric emergencies. It is frequent to have bleeding after a pap smear or an examination in the third trimester. You may experience some bleeding after exercise or intercourse and will frequently have bleeding during labor.