



# FERTILITY FACT SHEET

San Ramon / Orinda / San Jose

## Miscarriage

Miscarriage is the loss of a pregnancy before 20 weeks of gestation (the first or early second trimester). Other terms for miscarriage include spontaneous abortion or early pregnancy loss. Many times a miscarriage happens before a woman knows that she is pregnant. Miscarriage occurs in about 15% of all clinically recognized pregnancies in women under age 35, and the frequency of spontaneous pregnancy loss increases as a woman's age increases. By age 40, miscarriage rates in women are 30 % or greater.

Most miscarriages are not preventable. In most miscarriages, no cause is identified. It is estimated that 50-70% of all early pregnancy losses are due to a chromosomal abnormality (an extra or missing chromosome) of the fetus. While most miscarriages are a one-time occurrence, repeat miscarriage may occur in 1 in 20 women. If 2 or more miscarriages do occur, we advise a formal medical evaluation.

### Factors that may Contribute to Pregnancy Loss

- Maternal Age
- Tobacco Smoking
- Illegal Drug Use
- Chronic diseases or Medical conditions
- Obesity
- Poor or inadequate Nutrition
- Heavy Alcohol use
- Active Infection
- Irregular periods or Polycystic Ovary Disease
- An Abnormal Uterus (Distortion of the Uterine Cavity or Congenital Uterine Abnormality)

### Factors not proven to Contribute to Pregnancy Loss

- Sexual intercourse
- Stress
- Work

### Healing after a Miscarriage

For many women, the emotional healing takes a good deal longer than physical healing. The feelings of loss and grief can be intense. Even if the pregnancy ended very early, the sense of bonding between a woman and her fetus can be strong.

Your feelings of grief may differ from those of your partner. You are the one who has felt the physical changes of pregnancy. Your partner also may grieve, but may not express feelings in the same way you do. Your partner may feel they have to be strong for the both of you and may not share their hurt and disappointment with you. This may create tension between the two of you when you need each other the most.

If either of you is having trouble handling the feelings that go along with this loss, talk to your doctor. You also may find it helps to talk with a counselor.

A woman should not attempt to become pregnant again until she is both physically and emotionally ready. Medically, it appears safe to conceive after a woman has one (1) normal period following the miscarriage.

### Finally...

Don't blame yourself for the pregnancy loss. In most cases it is not likely that it could have been prevented. Losing a pregnancy often doesn't mean that a woman can't have more children or that there is something wrong with her health. Most women who miscarry can have a healthy pregnancy later.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.