

Recurrent Pregnancy Loss.



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Any woman who has gone through a miscarriage knows how traumatic the experience is. The hope and excitement of having a baby is suddenly and unexpectedly dashed.

A woman who has had 3 or more miscarriages is said to have a "bad obstetric history" or BOH and must be thoroughly investigated to find the cause and seek a solution to the problem.

Some of the commonest causes of an early pregnancy loss are a genetic problem with the baby. During development there can be a chromosomal problem and this prevents the pregnancy from growing normally. On sonography a miscarriage may be diagnosed as a blighted ovum (just a pregnancy sac but no foetus inside) or a missed abortion, where the baby grows for a few weeks but then the heart beat stops. Missed abortion may present with vaginal bleeding or it may have not symptoms and may be diagnosed only on sonography. In these cases the pregnancy sac can be sent for genetic testing and also the parents should have genetic studies (karyotyping) done.

Another common cause for repeated miscarriages is an abnormality of the womb (uterus). There may be a septum inside the womb due to birth defects such as a longitudinal septum (a curtain dividing the womb) or two uteri instead of one or there may be fibroids present in the womb. Many of these problems can be treated by laparoscopic or hysteroscopic surgery and the patient can subsequently be able to have a normal pregnancy.

These days, we are able to diagnose immunological problems by a simple blood test. In these patients, their bodies do not accept the baby and treats it like a foreign body and rejects it. These patients respond well to treatment with blood thinning tablets and injections.

Often, infections such as toxoplasmosis, herpes, cytomegalovirus etc can cause abortions. Some of these can be treated and this may help the patient in subsequent pregnancies. Hormonal deficiency can also occasionally cause miscarriage and this problem can be

solved by giving hormonal support during early pregnancy.

Abortions in the 4-6th month are often due to weak or incompetent cervix (mouth of the womb). Taking a stitch on the cervix gives excellent results in these cases and pregnancy can often go to 9 months, after this procedure.

It is important to get all the tests and diagnosis prior to pregnancy, so that the treatment can be initiated early and this gives the best results.

Patients question

I am 30 years old and have had three miscarriages at two, three and two and half months. Each time the baby's heart beat could not be seen on sonography. I had little bit of bleeding and I needed to undergo a curettage to clean out the womb. I am very depressed and desperate for a baby. Will I ever be able to have a normal baby? Please advise. Jyotika

Ans. You are suffering from Bad Obstetric History (BOH) as you have had three miscarriages already. The commonest cause of a missed abortion in the first three months is a genetic problem with the baby. It would have been a good idea to have checked for a genetic problem during these previous miscarriages by sending a small part of the fetus for karyotyping. It is also necessary now for you and your husband to undergo a blood test for karyotyping. Early miscarriages may also be due to hormonal deficiency and hence hormone support in early pregnancy is necessary for you. Sometimes immunological problems cause your body to reject the baby each time. Special medicines and injections can help improve this problem. You must undergo a hysteroscopy to rule out a septum prior to planning for another pregnancy.

For free consultation contact:
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