

Manual Vacuum Aspiration – treatment for miscarriage

We are really sorry that you have had a miscarriage. Hopefully, you have had information about the different treatments we can give you. One of these is called Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA). This leaflet tells you about the benefits and risks of MVA and what to expect when you come to hospital. If you have any questions or worries, please speak with someone from the Early Pregnancy Unit Team, who will be happy to help and support you. The Early Pregnancy Unit number is: 0118 322 7181.

What is MVA?

Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA) is a surgical procedure. It removes the pregnancy tissue left in your uterus (womb) after a miscarriage.

The procedure only takes about 15-20 minutes but you will be in unit for about two hours. You will be awake during the procedure. Before the procedure begins, the doctor applies local anaesthetic to your cervix (neck of the womb). This numbs any pain. Then the doctor pushes a narrow tube into your womb to gently remove with suction any pregnancy tissue left after your miscarriage.

MVA suits women who have had a miscarriage and want surgery to manage it, but do not want a general anaesthetic. Evidence shows that it is very successful. More than 97 out of 100 women who have MVA do not need any more surgery.

Why have an MVA?

We offer MVA to women with:

- Missed miscarriage (where the pregnancy has failed but is still inside the womb).
- Incomplete miscarriage (where some pregnancy tissue is still inside the womb).

This procedure is not suitable for all women who have had a miscarriage. We will discuss this with you during your consultation.

Before the MVA

- We will explain the risks and describe the procedure.
- We ask you to sign a consent form
- We will take blood for tests
- We will give you an appointment date and time for your MVA.
- You may need a pessary inserted 2-3 hours before the procedure. We will discuss this with you.
- We will ask you to take pain relief about one hour before your appointment. This will be either paracetamol 1g or ibuprofen 400-800mg. If you cannot take either of these, please tell us.

During the MVA

- You can bring one person with you for support during the procedure.
- A doctor will examine you using a speculum (like having a smear test). A nurse and/or healthcare assistant will help. This will allow the doctor to assess your cervix.
- The doctor will give you a local anaesthetic injection.
- When you feel comfortable and ready, the doctor will remove with suction the pregnancy through a small tube attached to a syringe.
- You will feel some discomfort during the procedure (similar to period pain). If you feel pain please tell the doctor or nurse. The doctor may give you extra local anaesthetic. If you find it too uncomfortable, the doctor can stop the procedure completely.
- The doctor will do an ultrasound scan after the procedure to check that all of the pregnancy has gone.

After the MVA

- When you feel ready, we will move you to a rest area. During this time we will check your pulse and blood pressure. We will offer you a drink.
- After you have passed urine (done a pee) and feel well you can go home. You should rest that day. You can return to work, if you feel well, after 24-48 hours.
- We will give you pain relief and antibiotics to take home.
- If you are Rhesus negative we will give you an anti- D injection.

What are the risks with MVA?

Complications related to this procedure are rare. They include:

- **Heavy bleeding.** It is normal to expect some amount of bleeding after your MVA. This is usually similar to a period and can last up to two weeks. It is advisable not to use tampons or resume sexual intercourse until the bleeding has settled.
If the bleeding becomes very heavy (i.e. you are soaking through sanitary towels every 15 minutes or passing clots the size of your hand) **then you need to contact the emergency number 0118 322 7181 or attend A&E.**
- **Pain.** You may experience some 'period-like' pain for a day or two. Taking regular pain relief such as paracetamol should help. If the pain is not settling with regular pain relief then you should call the emergency number for more advice.
- **Infection.** You will be given antibiotics to take at home following your MVA. If you experience worsening pain and/or bleeding from your vagina, please call the Early Pregnancy Unit team.
- **Incomplete evacuation.** This means that there is still some pregnancy tissue left following the procedure. In most cases, this tissue will come away naturally. The need for a repeat procedure is uncommon (3 in 100 women). If you are continuing to experience heavy vaginal bleeding and pain, please contact the EPU team.
- **Tear (perforation) of the womb.** This is a rare complication (1 in 1,000 women). If a perforation occurs you may need a look inside your tummy to check whether there is

bleeding, and if necessary repair the tear. This is done by a small cut on your tummy and inserting a telescope (laparoscopy) under a general anaesthetic.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at the Early Pregnancy Unit

Telephone: **0118 322 7181**. This number is available 24/7.

Alternatively you can call the NHS helpline on telephone: 111

In the event of an emergency, go to your nearest emergency department (A&E) or call 999.

Help, support and further information

The EPU team understand that this is likely to be an incredibly difficult time for you and your partner. The team will do their best to support you and answer your questions, worries or concerns.

Losing a pregnancy, even at an early stage, can be a devastating experience. Everyone is different and how you cope and feel will depend on your circumstances, previous experiences and physical wellbeing. You and your partner need time to grieve and to come to terms with what has happened.

If you are struggling with your loss you may benefit from professional support or counselling. Contacting one of the national support groups may be beneficial.

Miscarriage Association is a UK national charity, which gives support and information on the subject of pregnancy loss: Telephone: 01924 200799

Website: www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Willows Support Group is a local support group in the Reading area.

Website: <http://www.willowssupportgroup.co.uk>

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

A Chase, Consultant Obs & Gynae, May 2021

Reviewed: August 2023

Next review due: August 2025