

Previous minor post-partum haemorrhage (PPH)

This leaflet is for anyone who experienced a blood loss of between 500-1000mls with a previous birth and is now pregnant again. We will talk about the possibility of it happening again and your birth choices. If you have any questions, please ask your midwife or doctor.

What is a minor postpartum haemorrhage?

It is normal to bleed after you give birth. Bleeding mainly comes from the uterus (and is known as lochia) but blood loss can also be caused by any cuts or tears that happen during the birth. The normal blood loss is up to 500mls but sometimes, as you've experienced, bleeding can be heavier. This is called a haemorrhage and is common, affecting 5 in 100 women nationally. A minor post-partum haemorrhage (PPH) is defined as a blood loss of 500-1000mls (1-2 pints). If your blood loss was less than 1 litre then your care with this pregnancy will be routine and you will not need any additional appointments.

What are the chances of it happening again?

The chance of having a post-partum haemorrhage (PPH) again is 1 in 10 or 10%.

We recommend that you have the third stage of labour (delivery of the placenta) managed with a drug called Syntometrine with an Oxytocic drug – similar to oxytocin, the naturally occurring birth hormone. This injection helps the placenta to deliver and reduces blood loss. In line with national guidance we support delayed cord clamping whenever possible.

Your midwife, on admission to the hospital in labour, will review your notes and might recommend a blood sample to be taken to check your latest blood count. If they are concerned about your blood count or being able to put in a drip (via a vein in your arm) quickly they may recommend a cannula be inserted so fluids and medication can be given if needed.

How does it affect my birth choices?

The choice of where to give birth is yours. If your previous PPH was less than 1 litre you could consider a homebirth, Rushey or Delivery Suite. These options can be discussed in your personalised care plan with your midwife based on your individual needs and information about what happened in your previous birth/s.

If your blood loss was over 1 litre or you required a blood transfusion, it is recommended for you to give birth to your baby on the Delivery Suite where we can be prepared should it happen again. You will be able to move around and use the birthing equipment as for any other labour but we do advise against using the birthing pool for delivery of your baby, this is because it can be hard to monitor blood loss in water. This does not mean you cannot use the pool and water for pain relief during your labour, but if we need to monitor your bleeding you may be asked to get out.

References

1. NICE Clinical Guideline CG190 updated Dec 2022. Intrapartum care for healthy women and their babies <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg190>
2. Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists patient information - <https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/patients/patient-information-leaflets/pregnancy/pi-heavy-bleeding-after-birth-postpartum-haemorrhage.pdf>

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

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

Consultant Obstetrician & Practice Educator MW, 2016

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Our Maternity Strategy and Vision

'Working together with women, birthing people and families to offer compassionate, supportive care and informed choice; striving for equity and excellence in our maternity service.'

You can read our maternity strategy here



Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent