

# EARLY PREGNANCY BLEEDING AND PROGESTERONE

Taking progesterone supplements may prevent miscarriage for women and birthing people who are bleeding in early pregnancy and have had 1 or more previous miscarriages.

## What is progesterone?

Progesterone is a hormone. It is in the ovaries and tells the lining of the womb to grow. Progesterone helps the body stay pregnant in the early stages.

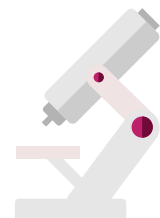
Progesterone can be given as pessaries to help increase hormone levels in the body during pregnancy to try to prevent miscarriage.



## Who can progesterone help?

Research\* has shown that taking progesterone may prevent a miscarriage if you:

- are bleeding in early pregnancy
- AND**
- have had 1 or more miscarriages before.



## NICE recommends progesterone to prevent early miscarriage\*\*

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends progesterone if:

- you are bleeding in pregnancy *and*
- you have had 1 or more miscarriages before *and*
- you've had an ultrasound scan that shows a pregnancy in the womb (uterus).

An ultrasound scan should be organised as soon as possible to avoid a delay in starting treatment.

## How is progesterone prescribed?

If you meet the criteria, you should be given progesterone as pessaries (usually 400mg twice daily) from the time you have vaginal bleeding up to 16 weeks of pregnancy.

**400mg  
2xDAILY**

The NICE guidelines say that progesterone can be started before a heartbeat is detected (if a scan has confirmed the pregnancy in the womb).

If you are asked by the Early Pregnancy Unit or the GP to wait for an ultrasound scan to confirm the pregnancy in the womb, ask them to prescribe enough progesterone for you to take until then. Some may insist you have the scan first, but it is worth asking.

Progesterone is safe to take in pregnancy.



## What to do if you are bleeding in early pregnancy

If you are bleeding in early pregnancy, contact your GP surgery or local GP walk-in service. You can also contact your nearest Early Pregnancy Unit if they offer a self-referral or walk in service. You can also contact NHS 111 at any time of day.

Go to your local accident and emergency department if you are bleeding heavily or in a lot of pain.

Bring this information sheet with you if possible or refer your healthcare professional to [tommys.org/progesterone](https://www.tommys.org/progesterone)

\* PRISM Trial: Multi-centre randomised placebo-controlled trial of effects of vaginal progesterone in women with early pregnancy bleeding. Coomarasamy et al. (2019). A Randomized Trial of Progesterone in Women with Early Pregnancy Bleeding. N Engl J Med, May 2019. Visit [tommys.org/PRISM](https://www.tommys.org/PRISM)

\*\* NICE (2021). Ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage: diagnosis and initial management. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence [www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg62/resources/guidance-antenatal-care-pdf](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg62/resources/guidance-antenatal-care-pdf)

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