

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

IF YOU HAVE ANY VAGINAL BLEEDING YOU MUST CONTACT THE HOSPITAL IMMEDIATELY ON (06) 350 8410. IF THIS BLEEDING IS VERY HEAVY, CALL AN AMBULANCE.

Having placenta praevia can be a frustrating time for you and your family. You feel well, but because of the risk of serious bleeding, you must be under specialist obstetric care.

We suggest that you...

- avoid any heavy lifting
- take care with household tasks which involves bending and lifting
- avoid sexual intercourse.

Please ensure your care providers are aware you have placenta praevia.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Midwife/Doctor.

FEEDBACK

We encourage feedback and assurance is given that comments will not adversely affect your current or future care.

You can do this:

- through discussion with MidCentral Health staff providing your care
- by completing "Tell us what you think..." pamphlets available from all services
- by contacting our Customer Relations Co-ordinator, PO Box 2056, Palmerston North 4440 or phone (06) 350 8980
- by contacting a Health and Disability Commissioner Advocate, phone 0800 112 233.



PLACENTA PRAEVIA



WOMEN'S HEALTH UNIT
PALMERSTON NORTH HOSPITAL

WHAT IS IT?

The placenta is the organ which transports oxygen and nutrients to the baby and takes wastes away.

The placenta (afterbirth) normally implants itself in the upper portion of the uterus (womb).

Placenta praevia (pronounced pree-vee-a) is when the placenta (afterbirth) attaches itself to the lower portion of the uterus, close to or over the cervix.

WHY DOES IT OCCUR?

The cause is unknown, but there is an increased chance of it occurring with women who have had a previous caesarean section, or previous placenta praevia.

Sources quote the chances of it occurring as 1:160 to 1:300.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME?

The cervix is the part of the uterus that opens up and allows the baby to come down through the vagina to be born.

If the placenta covers the cervical opening, you will need admission to hospital. You may not be able to birth vaginally and will probably need a caesarean section.

A consultation with a specialist obstetrician will be required.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS?

You may experience painless vaginal bleeding, particularly in the later months of pregnancy when the uterus enlarges and stretches. This bleeding could be a small to a very heavy loss.

Heavy bleeding can have serious consequences for you and your baby, needing emergency treatment at the hospital, with or without a blood transfusion.

The bleeding comes from your uterus, not the baby.

You may be asked to have more frequent visits to the hospital for monitoring, and in some instances, you may be required to stay in hospital until your baby is born. This is for closer monitoring and rest. This is a precaution, **just in case** you start bleeding vaginally, and require urgent attention.

At your delivery, whether vaginal or caesarean section, there is an increased risk of bleeding, and a blood transfusion may be required. This will be carefully discussed with you before you give birth.