



## **Bleeding During Pregnancy**

Bleeding or spotting may occur in 30-40% of pregnancies during the first trimester. Twenty percent of all pregnancies result in miscarriage. The usual cause of a miscarriage is a chromosomal abnormality in the fetus, not something that the pregnant mother has done or could have avoided. Viability can be determined by a vaginal ultrasound. Once a normal heartbeat is visualized, the risk of miscarriage decreases to less than 5% in the first trimester.

It is common to have bleeding after a Pap smear or pelvic examination. Bleeding after exercise or intercourse may also occur. Bleeding during labor is also common as the cervix stretches and softens. Most cases of heavy bleeding in the 2nd or 3rd trimester are caused by placental problems. These include a placental previa (the placenta covers part or all the cervix) or a placental abruption (a separation of the placenta from the uterine wall). If you experience heavy bleeding in the second or third trimester, call your physician.