

Spotting in Pregnancy: Should You Worry?

If you've ever watched Discovery Health [TV](#) show, "*I Didn't Know I Was Pregnant*," you'll discover there's a common theme among the different women. They all had [irregular periods](#) and they all had light "periods" throughout their [pregnancy](#). In a nutshell, many of the women experienced [spotting](#) throughout their unknown pregnancies.

Any vaginal bleeding can be scary, but if you experience spotting (light bleeding – similar to a very light day of your period), you shouldn't worry too much. Spotting in pregnancy is normal. In fact, between 20 and 30 percent of all pregnant women will experience spotting in the first trimester.

Try not to worry if you experience spotting (which is usually light pink or brownish in color – never bright red). Your risk of complications is less than five percent, according to new research from the Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine.

What Causes Spotting in Pregnancy?

Spotting in early pregnancy is almost always due to implantation (when the fertilized egg embeds itself into the lining of your uterus). Implantation can trigger a few days of light bleeding, and it can occur before the woman realizes she's pregnant.

Another possible cause of spotting in the first trimester is a cervical polyp, which is a harmless cervical growth that's more likely to bleed in pregnancy due to the elevated levels of estrogen in your body. Since there are more blood vessels in the tissue around your cervix in pregnancy, any physical contact with this area (i.e. having sex or undergoing a cervical exam) can lead to light spotting or bleeding.

Sometimes, your spotting is unrelated to any hormonal or pregnancy changes. Other causes of spotting in pregnancy include yeast and urinary tract infections (both of which are rather common when you're expecting) and hemorrhoids.

When to Call Your Doctor about Spotting

Although spotting in early pregnancy is normal, it's always a good idea to call your doctor to make sure that the light bleeding you're noticing isn't due to a complication – such as a threatened miscarriage or [ectopic pregnancy](#). Your doctor or physician to examine you to make sure that everything is OK.

Signs of a potential miscarriage include bright red bleeding that comes with abdominal cramping. If your spotting is brownish or reddish, and it does not come with any pain or discomfort, your pregnancy is most likely fine.

Later in your pregnancy, you should always talk to your doctor about any bleeding you experience. Spotting in late pregnancy can be a sign of:

- **Loss of your mucus plug** – A sign that labor might be on its way. You can lose your mucus plug weeks or days before labor starts.
- **Placental abruption** – Your placenta starts to separate from the uterus before your baby is ready to be born.
- **Incompetent cervix** – Your cervix starts to efface and dilate too early.
- **Placenta previa** – The placenta starts to partially or completely covers the cervix.

Try not to worry about complications, however. Spotting is normal in most situations. But it's a good idea to contact your caregiver. He or she can give you reassurance that everything is just fine with your baby.