



Placenta Previa

What is it?

Placenta previa is a condition that happens in pregnant women when the placenta covers the opening of the cervix. Normally, the placenta is not near the cervix. Placenta previa can cause severe bleeding from the vagina. Placenta previa is more likely in women who

- Had more than one c-section
- Had placenta previa in a previous pregnancy
- Smoke
- Have given birth several times before
- Are pregnant with more than one baby

Some women can have placenta previa early in their pregnancy, but as their baby and uterus grow, the placenta moves away from the opening of the cervix

What are the symptoms?

Most women leak blood from the vagina. Some women have contractions. A few women do not have any symptoms of placenta previa.

How is it treated?

You must not have sex. Sex can make the placenta bleed. Putting anything deep in the vagina can make the placenta bleed.

Treatment depends on your symptoms and how far along you are in your pregnancy. If placenta previa does not cause bleeding, you might have an ultrasound every few weeks to check it. The placenta sometimes moves into a normal position.

If you have a placenta previa that is bleeding, even a little bit, you will need treatment in the hospital right away.

Your medical team will

- Check your heart rate and blood pressure
- Check the baby's heart rate
- Check how much you are bleeding
- Give you IV fluids

If the bleeding does not slow down, your doctor may

- Give you a blood transfusion.
- Deliver the baby with a c-section, even if it means the baby comes early.

Delivery

If the placenta previa does not go away, your doctor will deliver the baby with a c-section about a month before your due date. This is because labor and vaginal delivery with placenta previa will cause severe bleeding. This is dangerous for you and your baby.

Most women who have placenta previa do not need to deliver the baby the first time they have bleeding. Some women might need to stay in the hospital until they give birth, but other women can go home when the bleeding stops.

While in the hospital, you might receive

- Iron pills, if you lost a lot of blood
- Medicines called "steroids" to help your baby breathe better when he or she is born. (These steroids are different from the ones athletes take to build muscle). It would be 2 separate shots 24 hours. You do not need these if you are 34 weeks pregnant or more or do not have symptoms

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Source: Lexicomp Online: Placenta Previa