



A closer look at recurrent miscarriage

This week Idai Makaya discusses recurrent miscarriages with Recurrent Miscarriage Specialist and Consultant Gynaecologist Rami Atalla.

The focus of this article is on the potential causes of recurrent miscarriage and the various things families and couples that have been affected by recurrent miscarriages need to be aware of.

MISCARRIAGE is a traumatic and yet surprisingly common experience in all societies and countries.

Because miscarriage is such a traumatic experience for families and individuals it is seldom spoken about publicly – especially when such conversations may involve individuals who have actually had the misfortune of experiencing a miscarriage.

This sensitivity around miscarriage is understandable, but it does leave many people in the dark in relation to the realities of miscarriages – what causes

them and what treatments and managements are possible in relation to them.

Having experienced this trauma myself when my wife miscarried her first pregnancy (thankfully, we have a beautiful daughter and a lovely son now) I am aware of the various emotions people are likely to face when this happens.

I think the worst thing about experiencing a miscarriage – or recurrent miscarriages – is the lack of information and the lack of general support available to people.

I now know there is a lot that can be done in this area and hopefully this article



Rami Atalla, on the left, holding Marianne with Therese and Rafik at a party held in Marianne's honour

will help inform others.

I've come to know Rami Atalla very well after meeting him at the Spire Harpenden Hospital, where he practices privately.

He's a Consultant Gynaecologist and Recurrent Miscarriage Specialist who is also a Clinical Director at the Queen Elizabeth II NHS Hospital.

His colleagues and patients have wonderful and often inspirational things to say about him (usually involving words such as "miracle worker," etc) and Mr Atalla has been kind enough to answer some questions for me relating to recurrent miscarriage, its causes and its clinical management.

Q **Idai Makaya:** To begin with, what is recurrent miscarriage?
A **Rami Atalla:** Recurrent miscarriage is a term used to describe three or more successive miscarriages.

Q What are the most common causes of recurrent miscarriages?

A In most miscarriages no cause could be found. However, the most common known cause for miscarriage is foetal chromosome malformations.

Q What are the rarer causes of recurrent miscarriage?

A Medical conditions of the mother – such as blood clotting disorders or diabetes. Congenital malformations of the womb are some of the rarer causes of miscarriages.

Q If someone has experienced recurrent miscarriages, what sort of investigations would you expect them to undergo to uncover the cause?

A The initial basic investigations should include chromosome analysis of both partners and blood clotting and antibody immunological analysis for the mother-to-be. Further tests would be arranged depending on the presentation of the miscarriages.

Q How easily are the causes of recurrent miscarriage uncovered?

A It is usually difficult to find a specific cause for the miscarriages, as there are several known causes for miscarriages. Sometimes, many investigations need to be performed.

Q At what stage of pregnancy do most miscarriages take place?

A Miscarriages can occur at any time in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy. The earlier the pregnancy the more likely the mother to experience a miscarriage

Q Are there ways of managing or reducing this risk?

A If a cause is found, miscarriage can be prevented in most conditions. If no cause is found, it is also possible to reduce the incidence of miscarriages

Q I know this is probably a very difficult question to answer, but of the recurrent miscarriages which occur what proportion do you think may have been treatable or preventable?

A It is difficult to quantify accurately preventable miscarriages but it is believed that up to 85% can be prevented - if mothers are investigated before the pregnancy.

Idai Makaya: Thank you, Mr Atalla. I think it is important for readers to be aware of the fact that there is hope – and it is important never to give up on their dreams of starting a family.

■ Rami Atalla will be speaking at a Recurrent Miscarriage Information Evening for the general public to be held at Spire Harpenden Hospital.

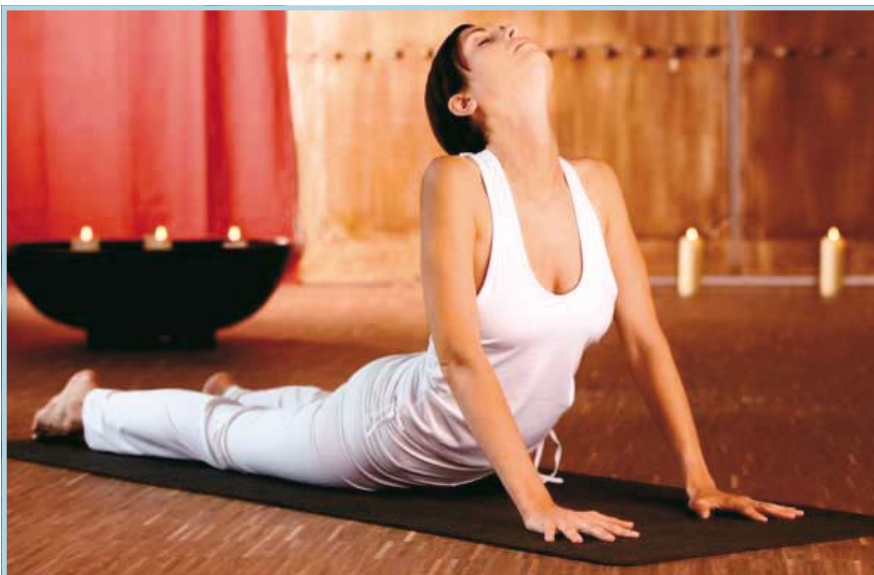
If you'd like to attend this event please contact Spire Harpenden Hospital on www.spirehealthcare.com/harpenden or 01582 714 420 for more information, or to register.



Rami Atalla holding the baby

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