

# The Bloody Show.

Isn't it strange how pregnancy turns us into creatures obsessed with our bodily fluids?

If you're trying to conceive, for example, you might first start monitoring your mucus. Then, there's the pee-on-a-stick pregnancy test, followed by the unpleasant pregnancy discharge over the next nine or so months.

Finally, for the grand finale, a constant watch for the two fluids that signify the end of pregnancy and the imminent birth of your baby: your water breaking and the infamous bloody show!

There's a lot of confusion about the bloody show. I have good news and bad news: The bloody show is a sign that your body is getting ready to birth your baby. But, it's not necessarily going to be as fast as you might hope.

Here's what you need to know about the bloody show.

You might've heard the term 'bloody show' but not actually know what it means.

It's the term used for bleeding at the end of pregnancy.

You might've heard the terms 'bloody show' and 'mucus plug' as though they're the same thing – but they're not.

Losing your mucus plug can happen over time. The mucus plug can also regenerate itself, so seeing some mucus isn't necessarily a sign labour is imminent. The mucus plug might begin to come away because the cervix is softening and thinning. You might see some blood in the mucus, which gives it a pink tinge, but there might also be no blood.

The bloody show happens because the cervix is dilating. This commonly happens after losing the mucous plug. But labour can begin without any bloody show. Confused? Carry on, it will become clearer,

## **Why does the bloody show occur?**

During pregnancy, your cervix is covered by a thick plug of mucus that helps protect your baby. The mucus literally "plugs" your uterus. This prevents any bacteria or other sources of infection from getting past the cervical barrier.

As your pregnancy comes to a close, your cervix will begin to dilate open to make way for your baby to pass through. When the cervix opens, the mucus plug is released.

You might lose your mucus plug entirely. Or, it can be lost in small amounts. If this is the case, you might not even notice it. Discharge can also increase at the end of pregnancy, and the mucus plug can be a part of that.

## **What causes the bloody show?**

Your cervix is actually part of your uterus. During most of your pregnancy, your cervix is thick, closed and hard. In the last month before birth, your cervix begins to soften and thin. This process is called ripening and usually takes place without you being aware of it.

As the cervix ripens, it becomes more pliable and will shorten, or efface. These changes allow your cervix eventually to dilate or open. When your cervix begins to dilate, small capillaries are burst, which causes some bleeding, don't worry, it doesn't hurt. The bloody show isn't always a dramatic affair. It can actually be very slight blood-tinged discharge. It can be so slight that you might not even notice it. In general though, it will be a very small amount, and shouldn't require you to wear a pad or panty liner. But if you're bleeding heavily or seeing signs of blood long before your due date, check in with your LMC immediately.

## **Ok, so now you wondering what does a bloody show look like?**

How bloody show looks can depend on a number of things. Most often the colour is bright red, but it can range from brown to pink.

If your mucus plug has already come out, the bloody show might look like spotting or light bleeding. Otherwise, a bloody show can be mixed with the mucus plug and appear as blood tinged discharge. Do a bit of a google search if you are interested in checking out a few photos.

## **How long after the bloody show before you go into labour?**

Since bloody show happens when your cervix is starting to dilate, it means your body is preparing for labour.

If you're close to your due date and see bloody show, it's a positive sign labour is on its way.

Every person's experience of labour starting is different. There is no guarantee labour will begin in the next 24 hours, in fact it could be days or even a week or so away.

Some people don't lose their mucus plug, or see bloody show, until they are well into active labour!

## **What should I do if I have a bloody show?**

If you're not 37 weeks yet, and you notice light spotting or bleeding, seek advice from your LMC. It's possible you're going into labour prematurely. If you're close to your due date and are already past 37 weeks, then bloody show is simply a sign your body is preparing to give birth.

Here's some good news: The bloody show is a sign that labour is impending. Losing your mucus plug, which is often accompanied or followed by the bloody show, usually happens right before labour starts or several days before.

But, when you're grasping for any hope to keep going at the end of pregnancy, it's helpful to know that the bloody show is a sign that things are moving along.

If you're near your estimated due date and you notice some increased discharge tinged with blood, get ready. It's almost baby time! After that, we can all get back to our normal, non-bodily-fluids-obsessed selves.

That is... until the baby comes. Then we can obsess over your newborn!!!



[www.hbantenatal-classes.co.nz](http://www.hbantenatal-classes.co.nz)

022 637 0624

Medical disclaimer: This page is for educational and informational purposes only and may not be construed as medical advice. The information is not intended to replace medical advice offered by physicians.