In Western medicine, there are three stages to a miscarriage or spontaneous abortion: 1) threatened miscarriage, 2) incomplete miscarriage, and 3) complete miscarriage. The patient may experience any or all of these stages. In threatened miscarriage, there is slight bleeding and lower abdominal cramping. However, the cervix is still closed and, therefore, treatment may prevent the further stages of miscarriage from occurring. In this case, a blood test is required to see if there is a positive and high hCG level to indicate a thriving embryo. If a positive and high hCG level is present, there is an approximately 90% success rate of carrying the fetus to full term. However, a positive hCG level that is low may indicate risk of losing the pregnancy.

Unfortunately, if there is heavy bleeding and more painful cramps, an incomplete miscarriage may be experienced. This requires the gynecologist to perform a D & C (dilatation and curettage). In a complete miscarriage, there is gradually less bleeding and cramping and the cervix eventually closes.

**IVF & the prevention of miscarriage: clinical experience**

Once the embryo has been fertilized and implanted into the uterus, it is extremely important to prevent miscarriage with IVF patients. Female patients around 40 years old experience a miscarriage rate of nearly 50% with IVF alone. However, with the help of Chinese medicine, the rate of miscarriage can significantly be reduced and the pregnancy can be supported to reach full term.

The most important rule to remember in treating threatened miscarriage with Chinese medicine is not to move the qi too forcefully or
quicken the blood. Any medicinals or points with these functions will promote the likelihood of miscarriage. The standard, traditional Chinese medicinal formulas for miscarriage are discussed later in this chapter and are useful for reference. Below are the protocols I have personally found useful in dealing with threatened, incomplete, and complete miscarriage.

The following points can be used in cases of threatened miscarriage:

- **Bai Hui** (GV 20) to lift the qi to hold the embryo
- **Si Shen Cong** (M-HN-1) to quiet the spirit and prevent uterine contractions
- **Yin Tang** (M-HN-3) to quiet the spirit
- **Ear**: **Shen Men** to quiet the spirit, Kidney to boost the essence to nourish the embryo, and halfway between the Liver & Spleen to help produce blood to nourish the embryo

**Additional points:**

For nausea and vomiting: **Shen Que** (CV 8, moxa only), **Zhong Wan** (CV 12), and **Tian Shu** (St 25)

For bleeding: **Bai Hui** (GV 20, moxa only), **Yin Bai** (Sp 1), **Da Dun** (Liv 1), and **Zu San Li** (St 36)

For back pain: (very mild acupuncture only) **Xin Shu** (Bl 15), **Ge Shu** (Bl 17), **Gan Shu** (Bl 18), **Pi Shu** (Bl 20), and/or **Shen Shu** (Bl 23)

In terms of Chinese medicinal support, my clinical practice has focused on supplementing the kidneys in all cases of threatened miscarriage. First, it is essential to identify if the underlying vacuity is more kidney yin or kidney yang. Formulas for each are listed below with modifications to address the other issues affecting each individual patient’s case.

1. **Kidney yang vacuity**

   Use **An Tai Fang** (Safety Fetus Formula):

   - **Tu Si Zi** (Semen Cuscutae Chinensis)
   - **Xu Duan** (Radix Dipsaci Asperi)
   - **Sang Ji Sheng** (Ramulus Sangjisheng)
   - **Shan Zhu Yu** (Fructus Corni Officinalis)
   - **Bai Shao** (Radix Albus Paeonieae Lactiflorae)
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Gou Qi Zi (Fructus Lycii Chinensis)
Dang Shen (Radix Codonopsitis Pilosulae)
Bai Zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae)
Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae Uralanesis)

Modifications:

For qi vacuity, add Huang Qi (Radix Astragali Membranacei). For spleen vacuity, add Shan Yao (Radix Dioscoreae Oppositae) and Fu Ling (Sclerotium Poriae Cocos). For kidney yin vacuity, add Shu Di Huang (cooked Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae) and Han Lian Cao (Herba Ecliptae Prostratae). For kidney yang vacuity, add Bu Gu Zhi (Fructus Psoraleae Corylifoliae) and Sha Ren (Fructus Amomi). For vacuity heat, add Sheng Di Huang (uncooked Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae) and Mai Men Dong (Tuber Ophiopogonis Japonici). For replete heat, add Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis). For blood vacuity, add Shu Di Huang (cooked Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae), Huang Jing (Rhizoma Polygonati), and He Shou Wu (Radix Polygoni Multiflori). For nausea and poor appetite, add Sha Ren (Fructus Amomi) and Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae). (Do not use Zhi Ke, Fructus Citri Aurantii, or Hou Po, Cortex Magnoliae Officinalis. These medicinals move the qi and the treatment principles forbid this action when preventing a miscarriage.) For vomiting, add Sheng Jiang (uncooked Rhizoma Zingiberis Officinalis) and Ban Xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae). For bleeding due to cold, add Ai Ye (Folium Artemisiae Argyii) or carbonized Jing Jie Sui (Herba Seu Flos Schizonepetae Tenuifoliae). For bleeding due to heat, add Han Lian Cao (Herba Ecliptae Prostratae) and Ce Bai Ye (Cacumen Biotae Orientalis). For abdominal pain, add more Bai Shao (Radix Albus Paeoniae Lactiflorae) and Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae Uralanesis). For anxiety, add Suan Zao Ren (Semen Zizyphi Spinosae), Long Yan Rou (Arillus Euphoriae Longanae), and/or Wu Wei Zi (Fructus Schisandraceae Chinensis). For diarrhea, add Fu Ling (Sclerotium Poriae Cocos) and Mu Xiang (Radix Aucklandiae Lappae).

2. Kidney yin vacuity

Use Yang Tai Fang (Nourish the Fetus Formula):

Tu Si Zi (Semen Cuscutae Chinensis)
Shu Di Huang (cooked Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae)
Shan Zhu Yu (Fructus Corni Officinalis)
Shan Yao (Radix Dioscoreae Oppositae)
Bai Shao (Radix Albus Paeoniae Lactiflorae)
Mai Men Dong (Tuber Ophiopogonis Japonici)
Suan Zao Ren (Semen Zizyphi Spinosae)
Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae Uralanesis)

 Modifications:

For qi vacuity, add Huang Qi (Radix Astragali Membranacei) and Dang Shen (Radix Codonopisits Pilosulae). For blood vacuity, add He Shou Wu (Radix Polygoni Multiflori) and Gou Qi Zi (Fructus Lycii Chinensis). For spleen vacuity, add Fu Ling (Sclerotium Poriae Cocos). For bleeding due to vacuity heat, add Han Lian Cao (Herba Ecliptae Prostratae). For bleeding due to replete heat, add Huang Qin (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis). For a sinking sensation in the lower abdomen, add Huang Qi (Radix Astragali Membranacei), Chai Hu (Radix Bupleuri), and/or Sheng Ma (Rhizoma Cimicifugae). For anxiety, add Long Yan Rou (Arillus Euphoriae Longanae) and Wu Wei Zi (Fructus Schisandraceae Chinensis). For low back pain, add Sang Ji Sheng (Ramulus Sangjisheng). For insomnia, add Bai Zhi Ren (Semen Biotae Orientalis). For nausea, add Sha Ren (Fructus Amomi) or Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae). For vomiting, add Ban Xia (Rhizaoma Pinelliae Ternatae) and/or Sheng Jiang (uncooked Rhizoma Zingiberis Officinalis). For abdominal cramps, increase the dosage of Bai Shao (Radix Albus Paeoniae Lactiflorae). For headaches, add Tian Ma (Rhizoma Gastrodiae Elatae).

Standard formulas:

Traditionally in Chinese medicine, there are four disease mechanisms that may cause miscarriage. They are qi and blood vacuity, kidney qi vacuity, blood heat, and traumatic injury.

1. Qi & blood vacuity

The signs and symptoms are bleeding and a dropping or sinking sensation in the lower abdomen. This may be treated with the classic formula, Tai Yuan Yin (Fetal Source Beverage):
Ren Shen (Radix Panacis Ginseng)
Bai Zhu (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae)
Dang Gui (Radix Angelicae Sinensis)
Shu Di Huang (cooked Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae)
Chen Pi (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae)
Du Zhong (Cortex Eucommiae Ulmoidis)
mix-fried Gan Cao (Radix Glycyrrhizae Uralensis)

Formula rationale:
Within this formula, Ren Shen fortifies the spleen, supplements the qi, and quiets the spirit. Bai Zhu fortifies the spleen, supplements the qi, and quiets the fetus. Dang Gui nourishes the blood. Shu Di Huang supplements the liver and kidneys and nourishes yin, blood, and essence. Chen Pi rectifies qi and downbears turbidity, thus reflexively promoting upbearing of the clear. It also helps prevent Shu Di Huang’s sliminess and enrichment from causing stagnation since it transforms dampness. Du Zhong supplements and invigorates kidney yang and quiets the fetus. Mix-fried Gan Cao supplements the qi and harmonizes all the other ingredients in the formula.

Modifications:
For severe qi vacuity, add Huang Qi (Radix Astragali Membranacei). For spleen vacuity, add Fu Ling (Sclerotium Poriae Cocos) and Shan Yao (Radix Dioscoreae Oppositae). For blood vacuity, add Gou Qi Zi (Fructus Lycii Chinensis) and He Shou Wu (Radix Polygoni Multiflori). For kidney yin vacuity, add Shan Zhu Yu (Fructus Corni Officinalis) and Sang Shen Zi (Fructus Mori Albi). For kidney yang vacuity, add Xu Duan (Radix Dipsaci Asperi) and Bu Gu Zhi (Fructus Psoraleae Corylifoliae). For kidney yin and yang vacuity, add Tu Si Zi (Semen Cuscutae Chinensis) and Sha Yuan Zi (Semen Astragali Complanati). For nausea, add Sha Ren (Fructus Amomi). For vomiting, add Ban Xia (Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae) and/or Sheng Jiang (uncooked Rhizoma Zingiberis Officinalis). For bleeding, add Han Lian Cao (Herba Ecliptae Prostratae) if due to heat or Ai Ye (Folium Artemisiae Argyii) if due to cold.

2. Kidney qi vacuity
When kidney qi is unable to hold the fetus, there is low back pain as
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well as a sinking sensation in the lower abdomen. Other signs and symptoms include vaginal bleeding during pregnancy, dizziness, weak legs, frequent urination, a pale tongue with white fur, and a weak pulse in the cubit position. When the kidneys are insufficient, the thoroughfare and controlling vessels become insecure and malnourished which deprives the fetus of proper nourishment. This leads to restless fetus stirring which, in severe cases, can manifest as vaginal bleeding, a sinking sensation, and sometimes miscarriage. The standard traditional formula given to treat these symptoms is *Shou Tai Wan* (Long Life Fetus Pills). The medicinals in this formula secure the kidneys and quiet the fetus:

*Tu Si Zi* (Semen Cuscutae Chinensis)
*Sang Ji Sheng* (Ramulus Sangjisheng)
*Xu Duan* (Radix Dipsaci Asperi)
*E Jiao* (Gelatinum Corii Asini)

**Formula rationale:**

Within this formula, *Tu Si Zi* supplements the kidneys, enriches yin, invigorates yang, and boosts the essence. *Sang Ji Sheng* nourishes liver blood and supplements kidney yin while also specifically strengthening the low back. *Xu Duan* supplements and invigorates kidney yang, strengthens the low back and quiets the fetus. *E Jiao* nourishes the blood, enriches yin, and stops bleeding.

**Modifications:**

For qi vacuity, add *Dang Shen* (Radix Codonopsitis Pilosulae) and/or *Huang Qi* (Radix Astragali Membranacei). For spleen vacuity, add *Bai Zhu* (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) and *Shan Yao* (Radix Dioscoreae Oppositae). For kidney yin vacuity, add *Shan Zhu Yu* (Fructus Corni Officinalis) and *Shu Di Huang* (cooked Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae). For kidney yang vacuity, add *Bu Gu Zi* (Fructus Psoraleae Corylifoliae) and *Du Zhong* (Cortex Eucommiae Ulmoidis). For blood vacuity, add *He Shou Wu* (Radix Polygoni Multiflori), *Gou Qi Zi* (Fructus Lycii Chinensis), and *Huang Jing* (Rhizoma Polygonati). For cramps due to uterine contractions, add *Bai Shao* (Radix Albus Paeoneae Lactiflorae) and mix-fried *Gan Cao*
(Radix Glycyrrhizae Uralanesis). For nausea, add *Chen Pi* (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae) or *Sha Ren* (Fructus Amomi). For vomiting, add *Sheng Jiang* (uncooked Rhizoma Zingiberis Officinalis) and/or *Ban Xia* (Rhizoma Pinelliae Ternatae). For bleeding due to cold, add *Ai Ye* (Folium Artemisiae Argyi) or carbonized *Jing Jie Sui* (Herba Seu Flos Schizonepetae Tenuifoliae). For bleeding due to vacuity heat, add *Han Lian Cao* (Herba Ecliptae Prostratae). For bleeding due to replete heat, add *Huang Qin* (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis), *Ce Bai Ye* (Cacumen Biotae Orientalis), and *Di Yu* (Radix Sanguisorbae Officinalis).

3. Blood heat

The signs and symptoms of this condition are bright red blood, a red facial complexion, possible low back pain, a red tongue with thick, possibly slimy, yellow fur, and a forceful, rapid pulse. The standard traditional formula for this pattern of threatened miscarriage is *Bao Yin Jian* (Protect Yin Beverage). The medicinals in this formula clear heat, stop bleeding, and nourish the embryo:

- **Sheng Di Huang** (uncooked Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae)
- **Huang Qin** (Radix Scutellariae Baicalensis)
- **Huang Bai** (Cortex Phellodendri)
- **Shan Yao** (Radix Dioscoreae Oppositae)
- **Bai Shao** (Radix Albus Paeoniae Lactiflorae)
- **Xu Duan** (Radix Dipsaci Asperi)
- **Gan Cao** (Radix Glycyrrhizae Uralanesis)

**Formula rationale:**

*Sheng Di Huang* nourishes yin, cools the blood, and stops bleeding. *Huang Qin* clears heat and quiets the fetus. *Huang Bai* also clears heat. *Shan Yao* supplements the spleen and kidneys and engenders fluids. *Bai Shao* nourishes yin, emolliates the liver, and relaxes uterine muscles to prevent uterine contractions and relieve cramps. *Xu Duan* supplements and invigorates kidney yang, strengthens the low back and quiets the fetus. *Gan Cao* harmonizes all the other ingredients in the formula.
Modifications:

For yin vacuity, add *Mai Men Dong* (Tuber Ophiopogonis Japonici). For blood vacuity, add *He Shou Wu* (Radix Polygoni Multiflori) and *Huang Jing* (Rhizoma Polygonati). For low back pain, add *Sang Ji Sheng* (Ramulus Sangjiisheng). For bleeding, add *Han Lian Cao* (Herba Ecliptae Prostratae), *Di Yu* (Radix Sanguisorbae Officinalis), and/or *Ce Bai Ye* (Cacumen Biotae Orientalis). For insomnia, add *Suan Zao Ren* (Semen Zizyphi Spinosae) and *Wu Wei Zi* (Fructus Schisandracea Chinensis).

4. Traumatic injury

Any accidents, falls, impacts, or pain-causing conditions may threaten the pregnancy and traditionally are treated with *Sheng Yu Tang* (Sagely Healing Decoction). This famous standard formula supplements the qi, nourishes the blood, and invigorates the kidneys. Even in the case of traumatic injury, it is important not to move the qi too forcefully or quicken the blood during pregnancy so as to prevent miscarriage. *Sheng Yu Tang* secures the fetus, especially if the patient experiences a constant ache in the lower abdomen, has a pale complexion and tongue, is lethargic and withdrawn, and has a fine, weak pulse. It consists of:

- *Shu Di Huang* (cooked Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae)
- *Dang Gui* (Radix Angelicae Sinensis)
- *Ren Shen* (Radix Panacis Ginseng)
- *Huang Qi* (Radix Astragali Membranacei)
- *Tu Si Zi* (Semen Cuscutae Chinensis)
- *Sang Ji Sheng* (Ramulus Sangjiisheng)
- *Xu Duan* (Radix Dipsaci Asperi)

**Formula rationale:**

Within this formula, *Shu Di Huang* nourishes blood, nourishes and enriches liver and kidney yin, and fosters essence. *Dang Gui* nourishes the blood. *Ren Shen* fortifies the spleen, boosts the qi, and quiets the spirit. *Huang Qi* greatly supplements the qi in order to nourish the blood. *Tu Si Zi* supplements kidney yin, yang, and essence. *Sang Ji Sheng* nourishes and enriches liver blood and kidney yin while also qui-
eting the fetus. Xu Duan supplements and invigorates kidney yang, strengthens the low back and quiets the fetus.

**Modifications:**

For spleen vacuity, add **Bai Zhu** (Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae) and **Shan Yao** (Radix Dioscoreae Oppositae). For kidney yin vacuity, add **Shan Zhu Yu** (Fructus Corni Officinalis). For kidney yang vacuity, add **Du Zhong** (Cortex Eucommiae Ulmoidis) and **Bu Gu Zhi** (Fructus Psoraleae Corylifoliae). For blood vacuity, add **He Shou Wu** (Radix Polygoni Multiflori) and **Gou Qi Zi** (Fructus Lycii Chinensis). For nausea, add **Chen Pi** (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae) or **Sha Ren** (Fructus Amomi). For a sinking sensation in the lower abdomen, add **Chai Hu** (Radix Bupleuri) and/or **Sheng Ma** (Rhizoma Cimicifugae). For bleeding due to vacuity heat, add **Han Lian Cao** (Herba Ecliptae Prostratae). For bleeding due to replete heat, add **Ce Bai Ye** (Cacumen Biotae Orientalis) and **Di Yu** (Radix Sanguisorbae Officinalis). For bleeding with cold due to yang vacuity, add **Ai Ye** (Folium Artemisiae Argyii) or carbonized **Jing Jie Sui** (Herba Seu Flos Schizonepetae Tenuifoliae). For abdominal pain, add **Bai Shao** (Radix Albus Paeoniae Lactiflorae) and **Gan Cao** (Radix Glycyrrhizae Uralanesis). For abdominal distention, add **Sha Ren** (Fructus Amomi) or **Chen Pi** (Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae).