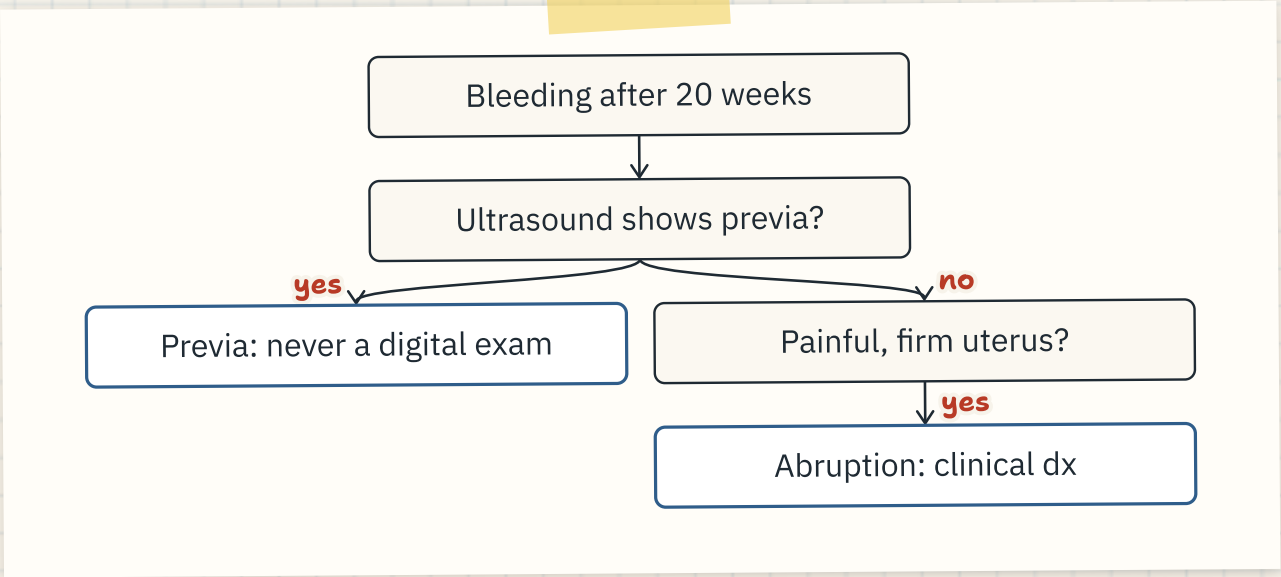
Previa vs abruption

Pain, uterine tone and ultrasound



Step by step

1. Bleeding after 20 weeks: ask about pain and feel the uterus
2. Ultrasound to look for previa
3. No digital examination until previa is excluded
4. Unstable: resuscitate and deliver
5. Check Rh type; platelets and fibrinogen in abruption

Feature	Previa	Abruption
Pain	Typically painless	Usually painful
Blood	Often bright red	Bright or dark; may be hidden
Uterus	Soft, non-tender	Firm, tender
Fetal heart rate	Usually normal	May show decelerations
Diagnosis	Ultrasound	Clinical

Previa and abruption

Rule of thumb

Painless and soft: think previa

Painful and firm: think abruption

Stable previa: cesarean at 36 0/7 to 37 6/7 weeks

Exam traps

- A normal ultrasound does not exclude abruption.
- The amount and colour of blood do not separate the two: abruption can hide behind the placenta.
- No digital vaginal examination until previa is excluded.

Placenta previa vs placental abruption

Video, written lesson, practice question and sources: medservatory.com/usmle-step-2-ck/ob-gyn/placenta-previa-vs-placental-abruption

For exam study only, not medical advice. Follow local guidelines and your lab's ranges.
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