

Early Pregnancy Loss

Information to Help You Cope

Please read this information when you feel ready. We hope that it will help you. No one can predict how you will feel after a pregnancy loss.

Feelings About Pregnancy and Loss

When a woman finds out she is pregnant, the emotional response can be very different from woman to woman. Sometimes pregnancies are highly desired and have taken a long time to achieve and sometimes they are unexpected. Sometimes there is a partner involved and sometimes there is not. The partner's response, as with a loss, may be the same as yours, or it may be very different.

Pregnancy loss (miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy) is most common in the first three months of pregnancy. Some women and couples have chosen not to tell friends and family while others have told many. Some, but not all, feel a sense of isolation and grief following a pregnancy loss. This is a time to heal physically while acknowledging the emotional impact on a person and their relationships.

For some women and families, pregnancy loss is not difficult to recover from emotionally. A woman may respond to an early pregnancy loss the same way as another short term life event that affects health, such as a surgery. Some women will feel relief after an early loss if a pregnancy is unplanned, sometimes causing feelings of guilt. There is no right or wrong response after a pregnancy loss. Your response is not necessarily within your control and may be different from those around you.

Diagnosing a Loss

When the health of the pregnancy is brought into question it can be frustrating waiting for a complete diagnosis. Often times it can be unclear if the pregnancy is growing normally between the time of having a positive pregnancy test and when the pregnancy can be seen on ultrasound. It is important for health care providers to be clear in the diagnosis, so that the best plan of care can be made.

Ask your health care provider whenever any information you have received is unclear.

After Your Loss

After a pregnancy loss you need to recover physically and emotionally. The physical recovery may be faster than the emotional recovery. Sometimes there are feelings of emptiness after the miscarriage, even if the pregnancy was not expected, and you may wish to get pregnant again, as soon as possible. The physical ability to get pregnant again can return within a few weeks, however most healthcare providers suggest waiting to try for pregnancy again until after your next period. If you are not choosing to get pregnant again, birth control plans should be made. Choose the right time for you to try to get pregnant again.

Many women feel some anxiety about future pregnancies and potential losses. If anxiety interferes with your daily functioning and sleep, then you may wish to consider seeing a counsellor or using other techniques to reduce anxiety such as exercise, relaxation, and meditation.

This is a time for you to take care of yourself. Most of the time there is no reason for the pregnancy loss and we encourage you to let go of guilt and blame. Let others know what you need (or do not need) to best help you through this time. It is ok to avoid events that trigger strong emotions such as family gatherings or baby showers while you are healing emotionally. Most people who are grieving will go through distinct stages of grief at some point such as bargaining, self-blame, sadness, and anger. Be compassionate towards yourself, your partner and others. Connecting with support people in your life, whether those are friends, family or caring professionals can be very helpful.

We hope that having some information about this common life event helps you cope with the loss of your pregnancy.

Please ask your health care provider if you would like more information, more resources or to speak to a medical social worker.

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