

Coping With a Miscarriage or Loss of an Infant



When you experience a miscarriage or the loss of a child, the pain and devastation of your loss can feel overwhelming. As you grieve, you may experience a range of emotions, including shock, denial, guilt, anger, despair and regret. While all of these feelings are normal, each person will process this life-changing event in his or her own unique way. The following information is intended to provide general guidance and support in your grief journey, but please do not hesitate to ask your healthcare team for additional support resources at any time.

Intense grieving

The initial rawness and intensity of grief will evolve over time; it will become a part of who you are as you integrate this deep loss into your life. You may have a deep yearning for your baby or feel envious of other expectant mothers and parents with healthy babies. You will experience many different feelings including disbelief, anger, fear, guilt, sorrow, pain, regret, despair and deep personal loss.

Crying is a very acceptable and healthy expression of grief and helps to release tension. Cry freely whenever you feel the need to and don't feel you must hide your feelings. This is a sad time for the entire family.

When there are siblings

If there are other children, be sure to share your thoughts and tears with them. Let them know they did not cause the baby's death or any changes in your behavior. Explain in a straightforward way by saying, "Our new baby died. His/her heart stopped. We are sad because our baby will not live with us as we had hoped and planned." Avoid saying, "We lost our baby," or "Baby is sleeping." Young children may take these words literally.



Giving yourself time

Whenever possible, hold off on making major decisions — such as moving or changing jobs — in order to give yourself time to adjust to your “new normal.” Giving yourself time to grieve and heal can often lend more clarity to future decision making.

If considering another pregnancy, give yourself sufficient time to mourn and heal. If you decide to have another pregnancy, choose new names as each child is unique and a new baby can never be a replacement for the child you lost.

Communicate your needs

Let family and friends know what you need. Many people struggle to find the right words and may say things that are unhelpful or insensitive. Friends and family want to help, but they don't always know how. You need to guide them.

Remember that everyone grieves differently. You and your partner may experience different feelings at different times. One of you may be more expressive about the loss, but this doesn't mean the quieter partner isn't suffering.

Seek support

Whenever you are ready or feel the need, consider a support group for parents experiencing loss. Participating in a support group with other parents going through similar experiences can provide validation and will help you feel less alone.

Days with meaning

The anniversary of your baby's birth and death, as well as holidays such as Mother's Day and Father's Day, can be painful and may stir up feelings unexpectedly.

Have patience with yourself. Your pain will lessen with time and you will eventually find healing and hope for the future.