

Coping With Grief

Grief is a process, not a state. There is no set time limit as people journey through their grief, so be patient and kind to yourself. There are different phases of the grief process.

- ▶ Shock and Numbness
- ▶ Searching and Yearning
- ▶ Disorientation
- ▶ Reorganization/Resolution

More detailed information about the phases and characteristics of grief can be found in the resources listed at the end of this brochure.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SUGGESTIONS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER AS YOU MOURN THE LOSS OF YOUR PREGNANCY.

- Make a list of questions to ask your doctor about what has happened.
- Share your feelings or have your feelings affirmed by your partner, doctor, nurse, social worker, chaplain or special friend.
- Collect mementos and keepsakes
- Gather information about support available in your community.

CARE FOR YOURSELF

- The physical and emotional impact of pregnancy loss can cause you to feel very tired and have difficulty coping, so rest when you can.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Seek medical attention if you have concerns about excessive bleeding, pain, fever, or infection.
- If you feel constantly overwhelmed, or unable to cope, contact your doctor, nurse, chaplain, or social worker for help.



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Resources for Support and Info

Spiritual and Religious Care

North York General
T 416.756.6311

Our Spiritual and Religious Care team offers resources and support for all losses.

They can provide a blessing and/or facilitate participation in the Fetal Burial Program for those suffering an early pregnancy loss.

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Network

Pickering, ON
T 905.472.1807 or 1.888.301.7276

Support group for perinatal loss.

Bereaved Families of Ontario

Toronto, ON
T 416.440.0290 or 1.800.236.6364

Support groups for all types of loss.

Ended Beginnings

Barrie, ON
T 705.734.2125

Support group for perinatal loss.

Miscarriage Association UK

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

An on-line resource for early pregnancy loss. Includes information for partners, children, family and friends.

Early Pregnancy Loss



What is Early Pregnancy Loss?

A miscarriage is the unplanned ending of a pregnancy before the 20th week of gestation.

Most miscarriages occur before the 12th week of pregnancy. About 20-25% of all pregnancies end in miscarriage. One of the main causes of pregnancy loss is a chromosome abnormality of the fetus. Other conditions such as infection, hormonal disruptions, or problems with attachment to the uterine wall can also be possible causes.

Complete Miscarriage

This is diagnosed when the fetus and all placental tissue have been expelled from the uterus following a history of bleeding and possibly cramping. This can be confirmed when an ultrasound scan shows that your uterus is empty. Usually no further medical or surgical treatment is required.

Incomplete Miscarriage

This is the diagnosis when an ultrasound scan shows that there is still tissue remaining in the uterus, even after a history of bleeding and when some tissue has already been passed. Sometimes this will require medical or surgical intervention.

Delayed or Missed Miscarriage

This is diagnosed when the fetus has died before 20 weeks of pregnancy, but has not been expelled. Sometimes this is only found when you have a routine ultrasound scan for dating or genetic screening, or if you had spotting, bleeding or cramping and your doctor has sent you for an ultrasound.

Anembryonic Pregnancy or Blighted Ovum

The pregnancy begins and the amniotic sac develops, but the fetus does not develop. The sac can grow fairly large. If greater than 20mm with no developing fetus present, it is an anembryonic pregnancy. In most cases you have signs and symptoms of a normal pregnancy until diagnosed by an ultrasound scan.

Ectopic Pregnancy

Is a pregnancy that begins to grow somewhere outside of the uterus. The most common place is in the fallopian tube (98%). This is often referred to as a “tubal pregnancy” but can also occur in the ovary, cervix or peritoneal cavity. Diagnosing this can be difficult. Once diagnosed, prompt treatment is required by either surgery, or medication.

Molar Pregnancy

Is a pregnancy where the placental tissue grows abnormally, requiring prompt treatment and follow-up. It never results in a normal pregnancy and can become life threatening if left untreated.

Emotions of Loss

There are many deep human emotions which can result from losses such as miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy, blighted ovum, or genetic termination. These can include shock, denial, anger, guilt, depression, sadness, fear, anxiety and numbness. In some situations, some may feel conflicted because they did not want to be pregnant. These reactions differ in intensity and duration from person to person.

In the situation where the pregnancy has not progressed normally or has been uncertain since the beginning, some may feel relief that it is finally over. However, recurrent losses and loss after infertility can be extremely devastating.

You can go back and forth feeling several of the emotions listed above, and they may even be in conflict from time to time. This can sometimes feel quite distressing.

People Grieve Differently

Some women feel overwhelming grief while others feel that it's an experience that they just have to live through.

You and your partner may grieve differently. Your partner may be upset because of the loss of the pregnancy and the physical and emotional impact it has had on you. They may withdraw, or avoid talking about the loss in order to avoid upsetting you. Encourage discussion and acknowledge the fact that you may both be grieving differently.

Other family members and friends may find it difficult to talk to you about your loss. They may find your loss and sadness difficult to cope with so they avoid talking about it. Some may try to cheer you up in the hope that you will deal with the pregnancy loss more quickly. Unfortunately, some people will not understand the significance of your loss.

Acknowledge Your Grief

Emotions may come and go in waves. For example, when you least expect it, you may feel very weepy on special occasions such as holidays and birthdays, or upon hearing a certain song. These triggers can occur any time. Hearing about a birth of other family and friends, seeing other pregnant women or women with newborn babies may also trigger many emotions. During these moments, some people like to seek out others who will listen and offer support. Others prefer to be alone for awhile. The feelings that you experience are not right or wrong, they are what they are. Most importantly, they are all common feelings.