

## Pregnancy Loss and Grief

Everyone desires a happy and healthy pregnancy. However, the outcome may be unexpected and sad. Sometimes a pregnancy ends with a miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or stillbirth. The death of a baby changes your life forever. If your baby dies, the staff at your clinic and the hospital can assist you in your grief. It is important for you to receive spiritual, emotional and physical support to help you through your grief.

### Types of pregnancy loss

- **Miscarriage:** A miscarriage is a pregnancy loss that occurs before 20 weeks gestational age. Miscarriages occur in 15-25 percent of all pregnancies, usually during the first trimester. The exact cause of the pregnancy loss is usually not known. While miscarriage is common, your loss is unique to you. DO not expect yourself to be comforted by knowing many miscarriages happen. This was your baby, your hopes and your dreams.
- **Ectopic Pregnancy:** In an ectopic pregnancy, the fertilized egg implants outside of the uterus, usually in one of the fallopian tubes. Immediate treatment is necessary for an ectopic pregnancy because it can present a critical situation. An embryo pushing on a tiny fallopian tube can cause great pain, decreased blood pressure and vaginal spotting. If the fallopian tube bursts, it can cause serious abdominal bleeding and a crisis situation.
- **Stillbirth:** A stillbirth is the death of a baby that occurs after 20 weeks gestational age. Some common feelings are anger, sadness, confusion and loneliness. It will be hard to believe your baby died. We can assist you with your individual needs. Remember to get support from your loved ones and to give yourself time to grieve.

### Grief related to pregnancy loss

Pregnancy is the beginning stage of parenthood. It should be a time of joy and expectation. Sadly,

pregnancy sometimes ends in a loss. When this occurs, you cannot complete the planning for the baby and implement the role of parenthood. You may feel like parents, but now have no baby in your lives.

### The grieving process

When you learn that your baby has died, you may be in shock and have difficulty comprehending the news. This reaction is normal. It is important for you to identify your emotions and work through the feelings of grief. There is no correct way to move through the grief process. Some parents find it helpful to talk to other parents who have experienced loss. Others find support from family, friends, church and social settings.

### People grieve differently

Each parent grieves differently and there is no correct way to feel following a pregnancy loss. Take time to identify support systems. Because your spouse or partner may feel sad and have limited emotional energy, you may need to receive support from someone else. Your partner may be grieving, but may not want to burden you with further pain or disappointment. The death of a baby is a crisis for any relationship. Grief is felt and expressed in a wide variety of ways. Accept that each of you will deal with this experience differently.

### Resources

- Bereavement/Perinatal Loss help line for resources and individualized care. (320) 251-2700, x 53528. [Centracare.com](http://Centracare.com)
- Babies Remembered (952) 476-1303 or [www.wintergreenpress.org](http://www.wintergreenpress.org)
- Missing Grace Foundation [www.missinggrace.org](http://www.missinggrace.org)
- Compassionate Friends (639) 990-0010 or [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)
- First Candle (800) 221-7437 or [www.firstcandle.org](http://www.firstcandle.org)
- SHARE: Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support (800) 821-6819 or [www.nationalshare.org](http://www.nationalshare.org)