

Miscarriage Support Guide

Our thoughts, prayers and sympathies are with you.

Having a miscarriage — no matter the stage of pregnancy — can be a very painful experience. We are here to help you through this difficult process. We hope this information will help you understand the physical and emotional changes that may occur.

Understanding Miscarriage

Miscarriage is defined as the loss of pregnancy at less than 20 weeks gestation. It is a very common experience. In fact, studies show that 75 percent of women will have a miscarriage sometime during their childbearing years. There are several possible causes of miscarriage, but the exact cause often cannot be identified. Further testing may be needed to help you and your physician understand what caused the loss and if it will affect any future pregnancies.

Miscarriage is most common during the first trimester. There are several known causes of miscarriage including:

- The cervix cannot support the weight of the fetus (cervical insufficiency).
- The egg does not become planted into the uterine lining correctly.
- The pregnancy does not occur in the uterus (an ectopic pregnancy).
- The pregnancy does not develop into a fetus (a molar or partial molar pregnancy, or a blighted ovum).
- The fetus develops chromosomal abnormalities.
- Hormonal imbalances
- Infections
- Maternal health conditions, age or trauma

Coping With Grief

Experiencing a pregnancy loss can be very difficult. The emotional impact often takes longer to overcome than the physical healing. You may experience a wide range of emotions including guilt, anger, sadness, loneliness and disbelief. It is important to remember that these feelings are normal, and there is nothing you could have done to prevent the miscarriage. Allow yourself to grieve, as it is a normal and natural part of healing for your mind and your body.

Many people around you, including friends, family and your partner, may not react as you might expect. Men and women will often react differently to loss. Talking to each other is essential in the healing process. By talking through your feelings about the loss, you will better understand it emotionally and be able to work through your grief.

Your Body's Response to Miscarriage

It may take a month or more to recover physically from a miscarriage. Your recovery will depend on how far along you were into the pregnancy. Vaginal bleeding, similar to a menstrual period, may last up to a week after a miscarriage. Lower abdominal pain — similar to menstrual cramps — may last up to two days after the miscarriage.

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al número siguiente 407-303-3025.

ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyòl Ayisyen, gen sèvis èd pou lang ki disponib gratis pou ou. Rele nimewo ki anba an 407-303-3025.

Some women may also experience breast discomfort, breast engorgement or leaking milk during the first week. Hormonal changes also occur as a woman's body returns to its pre-pregnancy state.

There are several things you can do until your bleeding stops to help prevent infection. These include:

- Use sanitary pads rather than tampons. Wait until your next period before using tampons.
- Do not douche.
- Do not go into swimming pools or hot tubs.
- Take showers instead of baths.
- Do not have sexual intercourse.

HEALTH CARE PROVIDER FOLLOW-UP

A follow-up exam with your health care provider is recommended four to six weeks after a miscarriage. It is important not to postpone or overlook this appointment. Contact your health care provider immediately if you have any of the following warning signs, which may be an indication of an infection.

- Vaginal bleeding that increases or continues over several weeks
- A fever of 100 degrees or above
- Bleeding that changes to bright red
- Pain or unusual cramping
- Discharge that has a bad odor or looks infected (yellow or green)

Getting Pregnant Again

Some women may want to become pregnant again soon after experiencing a miscarriage. It is important to make sure you are physically and emotionally ready to be pregnant again. Discuss your plans to get pregnant with your health care provider. If there were medical complications with your miscarriage, a referral to a specialist for further evaluation may be recommended.

Depending on your menstrual cycle, normal periods should resume in three to six weeks after a miscarriage. It is possible to become pregnant as soon as two weeks after an early miscarriage. If you are not ready to become pregnant again, be sure to use birth control.

When you become pregnant again, you may feel anxious and scared. For some parents, talking to a professional counselor or joining a support group can help you better process your feelings. Discussing your feelings with your health care provider can help them guide you appropriately.

Community Resources

The following resources may be useful to you and your family during this difficult time.

GRIEF SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

- **H.E.A.L Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support Group**
407-303-5715
- **The Finley Project**
407-463-7576 | TheFinleyProject.org
- **The TEARS Foundation**
253-200-0944 | TheTearsFoundation.org
- **Angel of Hope of Central Florida**
407-260-9222 | AngelOfHopeCFL.org
- **Perinatal and Neonatal Bereavement Support Group at Winnie Palmer Hospital for Women and Babies** 407-649-6947

GRIEF SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

- **New Hope Center for Grieving Children**
For children ages 3-18 | 407-331-3059
NewHopeForKids.org
- **Horizons Children's Loss Program**
407-379-0497 | HospiceOfTheComforter.org

Please note: this is a resource list only and organizations listed are not specifically endorsed by AdventHealth.

For information on available resources or hospital-related questions after discharge, contact the AdventHealth Bereavement Support Line at 407-303-8721.