



Miscarriage and pregnancy loss can be deeply distressing and heartbreaking. A miscarriage is the loss of a pregnancy before 20 weeks, with most miscarriages happening in the first 12 weeks. Miscarriage is common, with estimates indicating 1 in 4 pregnancies are impacted by miscarriage - but that does not make the experience any less distressing. It can affect your body, your emotions and your sense of wellbeing. You may feel shocked, sad, angry, numb or overwhelmed. It can also feel lonely, especially if few people knew about the pregnancy.

Understanding Miscarriage and Pregnancy Loss

After a miscarriage, many people want to understand why it happened. Often there is no clear answer. In many cases, there is nothing that could have been done to prevent it. Sometimes a miscarriage happens because the pregnancy was not developing as expected, and sometimes medical factors are involved. If miscarriages happen more than once, further tests may be recommended. It is important to remember that miscarriage is not your fault.

Miscarriage can affect both your physical and emotional wellbeing. You may feel shock, sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety, tiredness or confusion. You may also experience headaches, cramping, bleeding, sleep difficulties, or feel like you have lost trust in your body. Some people worry about future pregnancies or find reminders especially hard. Partners and support people can be deeply affected too. If the loss feels traumatic, symptoms of anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress can continue for some time. Sometimes medical treatment is needed after a miscarriage, which can add further stress. Ectopic pregnancy is different from miscarriage, but it can also be experienced as a pregnancy loss and needs urgent medical care.

Meaningful Ways To Honour Your Loss

Finding a meaningful way to acknowledge your loss can be a helpful way to process grief. For some people, rituals or small acts of remembrance bring comfort and connection. Others may feel unsure about what they need, and that is okay too. There is no right or wrong way to honour your experience. Choose what feels meaningful for you.

- Keep a special item, such as an ultrasound image, letter, piece of jewellery, or memory box.
- Name your baby or write them a letter.
- Mark important dates in a gentle and personal way, such as lighting a candle or spending quiet time reflecting.
- Create something in their memory, such as artwork, planting a tree, or a small keepsake.
- Make a donation in the baby's name to a charity or hospital.
- Take part in cultural, spiritual or religious rituals that feel important to you.

You can return to these rituals whenever you need to, especially around anniversaries, due dates or other reminders.

Looking After Yourself

Grief can be exhausting and looking after yourself may feel hard right now. Small, gentle steps can help. Try to take things one day at a time and be kind to yourself.

- Let yourself feel whatever comes up, without judgement.
- Eat regular meals, rest when you can, and try gentle movement if it feels helpful.
- Talk to your partner, a friend, family member or support person.
- Write in a journal or do something creative if that feels comforting.
- Take a break from reminders that feel too painful and return to them when you feel more ready.
- If sleep feels hard, speak with your regular GP for support.
- Aim to avoid alcohol or other substances that may make you feel worse.
- Accept practical help from others if it feels right, such as meals, childcare or help around the house.
- Ask for time off work if you need it or consider a gradual return if that feels more manageable.



- Set boundaries that feel right for you, including taking a break from social media if needed.
- Consider attending a peer support group if it feels helpful to connect with others who understand.
- Speak with your GP or trusted health professional if you are worried about your body, your emotions, or future pregnancies.

Grief is personal, and there is no right way or timeline to move through it. Try to give yourself permission to grieve in your own way and in your own time.

Grief can rise again around anniversaries, due dates, family events or other reminders. This is a normal part of living with loss and does not mean you are going backwards. You may also feel unsure about when you are physically or emotionally ready to try to fall pregnant again. If you have a partner, try to keep communication open and make space for each of you to grieve in your own way.

Getting Support

You do not have to go through this alone. Support is available and talking with someone who understands pregnancy loss can help.

- GP, Obstetrician or Midwife: They can support your physical recovery, answer questions, and refer you for extra support.
- Gidget Foundation Australia: Individual psychological therapy services for those affected by miscarriage and pregnancy loss with a perinatal mental health clinician
- Additional Support & Resources: The following organisations may also offer helpful information and support.
 - **Miscarriage Australia**
 - **PANDA**
 - **Pink Elephants**
 - **Red Nose Grief and Loss Support**
 - **The Royal Women's Hospital**
- Family & Friends: Practical help and understanding can make a big difference.

Healing after miscarriage can take time, and everyone's experience is different. There is no right way to grieve. With care, support and compassion, many people find ways to carry their loss while continuing to move forward.

If you or your partner have concerning symptoms, or you are worried about a pregnancy at any time, contact your healthcare provider or go to the nearest emergency department. If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 000. If you need urgent mental health support, call **Lifeline** on 13 11 14 or **Beyond Blue** on 1300 22 4636. 🌸