

## Losing a Baby

### What is a miscarriage?

The loss of a pregnancy during the first 20 weeks.

### What is a stillbirth?

The loss of a baby after 20 weeks of pregnancy but before the baby is born. Stillbirth can happen during pregnancy or during labour.

When a baby is lost through miscarriage, ectopic (tubal) pregnancy, stillbirth or other misfortune, it can bring many difficult emotions. You may have problems being around pregnant people and families with babies. Whatever your feelings, they're normal.

If your baby is stillborn, you'll be able to see and hold her. You may choose to take pictures of her or to bring home a memento, such as a blanket. Take your time to talk with her and say goodbye. Don't let her go until you feel ready.



### KEY TAKEAWAY

Most miscarriages happen in the first trimester because the fertilized egg doesn't develop normally. They're not anyone's fault.

### Helping You Cope

In addition to the emotional stress caused by losing the baby, you'll also be dealing with the physical effects of labour and delivery, like swollen breasts and soreness between your legs.

Your health care provider can give you information, help you make difficult decisions and set up counselling and referrals. Help is also available from the hospital social worker, chaplain and nurses. After you leave the hospital, you can find support through the public health nurse, local crisis centres, Elders, spiritual or religious leaders, grief counsellors, B.C. Women's Hospital & Health Centre (bcwomens.ca), HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 and others who have been in similar situations. For some, medication may help.



### FAMILY & FRIENDS

#### What You Can Do

The best thing to say to a grieving parent may simply be, "I'm so sorry."



### DID YOU KNOW

Indigenous hospital liaisons can help guide Indigenous families to say goodbye after the loss of a baby.

### Having a Baby After a Pregnancy Loss

A loss will likely affect how you and your partner cope with a new pregnancy. It's normal to feel anxious and to need reassurance that your baby is doing well.

Talk with your health care provider about what you can do to have the healthiest pregnancy possible. Consider ways to reduce your stress, such as doing relaxing activities, and visualize yourself having a healthy baby.



### PARTNERS

#### What You Can Do

You and your partner may react differently to losing a baby. Time helps. Be patient. Reach out for help if you need it.

