



About Pregnancy Loss

The loss of a baby during pregnancy is a devastating experience for many women and their families. The emotional grief and sense of isolation can be overwhelming; however, it is important to remember that you are not alone. Estimates suggest that about 1 in 4 pregnancies end in loss. The intensity of grief is not correlated with the length of pregnancy. Women who experience a loss early in pregnancy may experience grief as intensely as someone who experiences a loss much later.

Early Pregnancy Loss (Miscarriage)

Early pregnancy loss is the spontaneous delivery or death of a baby before 20 weeks of pregnancy. You may hear this type of loss referred to as a miscarriage, spontaneous abortion, fetal demise, or early pregnancy loss.

Approximately 80% of losses occur during the first trimester (up to 12 weeks).

Although many women do not experience any symptoms of early pregnancy loss, the most common symptoms include:

- vaginal bleeding
- lower abdominal cramps/pain,
- clot-like material or tissue from the vagina

It is important to note that bleeding from the vagina does not always mean a miscarriage is inevitable.

The most common causes of early pregnancy loss are problems with the development of the baby or placenta. Approximately 50% are the result of chromosome abnormalities such as having too many or too few chromosomes. However, the cause of early pregnancy loss is often unknown. The most important thing to remember is that pregnancy loss is not your fault.

Research has shown that pregnancy loss is NOT caused by:

- stress
- exercise
- lifting heavy objects
- past history of sexually transmitted infections
- use of over-the-counter medications
- intrauterine devices (IUD)
- oral contraceptives

Late Pregnancy Loss (Stillbirth)

Stillbirth is the death of a baby any time after 20 weeks of gestation that occurs before or during delivery.

This type of loss may be referred to as late pregnancy loss, fetal death, or stillbirth.

Approximately 1 in 3 stillbirths are unexplained; however, the most common causes of stillbirth include:

- Birth defects
- Problems with the placenta
- Umbilical cord accidents
- Infections
- Maternal health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, or clotting disorders

If your baby has passed but you are not yet in labor, talk to your provider about your options. Here are a few things to consider:

- Natural labor - You can opt to wait for labor to begin on its own. Keep in mind that the condition of your baby may deteriorate depending on how long you wait.
- Induced labor - Healthcare providers often recommend induction of labor as the best option for stillbirth delivery. There are also health conditions in which induction is necessary.
- Cesarean section - A c-section may seem easier emotionally; however, it is important to note that it is major surgery, and your recovery will likely be more difficult. Furthermore, a cesarean section may have implications on future pregnancies.

Your physician may request to perform studies to figure out why your baby has died. However, it is important to remember you did not cause your baby's death.



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