

Patient Information Leaflet

Your feelings after miscarriage

Produced By: Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit

Sept 2012
Review due September 2015



Every miscarriage is different and there is no correct way to feel about it. This leaflet looks at how your loss may affect you, your partner and other close people around you. It also suggests ways to help you cope at this distressing time.

Is it normal to feel this way?

Pregnancy loss can be a devastating experience. For some women it is a great sadness; others are upset at the time but recover quickly.

How you feel will depend on your circumstances, your experience of miscarriage and what the pregnancy meant to you.

Maybe this pregnancy was particularly special. Perhaps you have experienced an earlier loss - or more than one.

You may be worried about your chances of conceiving again; or miscarrying again when you do.

You may feel ill and drained after a very difficult miscarriage.

All of these experiences will affect how you feel about your pregnancy loss and how long it will take you to move on.

It is perfectly normal to feel any or all of these emotions;

- Sad and tearful
- Shocked and confused
- Numb
- Angry
- Jealous
- Guilty
- Empty and lonely
- Panicky and out of control
- Unable to cope with everyday life

You may feel your loss in physical ways, even some time after the miscarriage. This can include

- Feeling very tired
- Having headaches or other physical pains
- Feeling breathless and anxious
- Finding it difficult to sleep – or sleeping a lot.

These symptoms will probably disappear in time, but if you are worried you can talk to your GP.

A special sort of grief

Miscarriage is a different kind of loss. It's not like grieving for someone you knew. You may mourn the loss of your baby's future. This can be hard for others to understand and relate to.

The physical effects of miscarriage –especially the discomfort and bleeding – can increase your sadness and anxieties. There may be a need for you to be followed up in the clinic for further tests and examinations. This can also add to your anxieties.

All of these feelings and emotions are perfectly normal to experience at this time and are a normal part of the grieving process.

Why do I feel like this?

- “Shouldn't I be over it by now?”
- “Are my feelings normal?”
- “Why do I feel so bad when others have suffered more than me?”

Women often ask these questions after miscarriage. But there are no rules about how you should feel. There are no rules which say that some experiences of pregnancy loss are less upsetting than others.

We all react and deal with things in our own way.

Early miscarriage can lead to strong feelings of loss. If you felt very attached to your baby as soon as you knew you were pregnant, you are likely to be very upset if you miscarry.

Perhaps you were aware of problems in your pregnancy, vaginal bleeding or abdominal pain are examples of this. You will probably feel very sad, but also may feel some relief that the uncertainty and waiting is now over so that you can move on.

If you have children already may bring you some comfort. But this doesn't necessarily make this loss easier to bear.

You may feel particularly low if it took you along time to get pregnant.

If you have suffered pregnancy loss before, it can be heartbreaking to go through it again.

Again, all of these feelings are a normal way of dealing with loss.

How long will I feel like this?

There is no set time for your sadness to end; and it may last longer than you or people around you expect.

Even when you start to feel better there may still be some bad times.

You might get upset when you have your first period after the miscarriage. The bleeding may remind you of the miscarriage and the fact that you are no longer pregnant. But the fact that your period has now returned may help you move on and start trying for another pregnancy.

You may experience bad days out of the blue. This is sometimes for a reason, like if a friend or colleague tells you about her pregnancy or child. You may experience feelings of anger, frustration, despair or bitterness. Try not to feel bad or guilty about these feelings, it is quite normal to feel like this when you are grieving.

Meeting friends and relatives after your miscarriage can be very upsetting. You may feel that you are able to talk easily to some and they are able to understand and share your feelings. Others may avoid you and your partner. They are not being unkind, it is just that they may feel uncomfortable and frightened to ask how you feel, or to say how sorry they are for fear of distressing you.

But there will come a time when your feelings change as the pain of your loss eases and you feel able to move on with your plans.

What about my partner's feelings?

Your partner may also be feeling similar emotions but may not share them for fear of upsetting you. Please share this leaflet with them it may help you talk things through and enable you to understand how the other person is feeling.

You may decide that you need further help with coming to terms with miscarriage and there are various ways to access this

- Talking to someone you are close to like a family member or friend
- Seeing a professional counsellor. Your GP will be able to help with this.
- The Miscarriage Association has a telephone helpline, a volunteer support service, and an online support forum.
- The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy can help you find a counsellor or psychotherapist if you wish to arrange this privately.

Future Pregnancy

There is no fixed time that you should wait to conceive another baby. It is when you and your partner feel ready, this time can vary. Some couples may feel they want to try for a baby soon, others may wish to wait

It is a good idea to wait until after you have had at least one normal period. The chances are that your next pregnancy will be successful. The fact that you have had one miscarriage doesn't mean you are more likely to have another, but it makes sense to get as fit and healthy as possible

We suggest that you

- Stop smoking
- Eat a healthy well balanced diet
- Take folic acid daily
- Make sure that you have been vaccinated against Rubella (German measles).. your Gp surgery will help you with this if you are unsure.

Your feelings

- There is no right way to feel after miscarriage: it depends on your circumstances and what the pregnancy meant to you.
- Miscarriage is a different kind of loss and you grieve for it in a different kind of way
- How you feel will be unique to you and your partner
- You may feel upset for longer than you – and those around you – expect
- Talking openly with your partner about your feelings may help you both,
- Friends and family won't always say the right things but there are support systems to help you.

Useful Links

The Miscarriage Association
17, Wentworth Terrace
Wakefield
WF1 3QW

Telephone 01924 200799

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
BACP House
15 St John's Business Park

**Lutterworth
LE17 4HB**

Telephone 0870 443 5252

www.counselling.co.uk

You can get further information on all sorts of health issues through NHS interactive available through Sky TV or online at: <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/>

For Health advice and out of hours GP service please call Island Health Line on 0845 6031007

We Value Your Views On Our Service

If you wish to comment on the care which you, your relative or friend has received, we will be pleased to hear from you. Please speak to the person in charge of the ward, clinic or service in the first instance or ask them to contact the Quality Team. If you wish to contact them directly, telephone on 534850.

Alternatively you may prefer to write to:

Chief Executive
Isle Of Wight NHS Primary Care Trust
St Mary's Hospital
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5TG

You can also share any concerns you have about our services with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on 03000 61 61 61 or at enquires@cqc.org.uk

All NHS sites are no smoking areas.

If you would like help and advice to stop smoking please call: 01983 550386 to talk to Island Quitters,

Ref: **OG/mis/01**