

Pregnancy Loss Guidance

Losing a pregnancy (having a miscarriage) is a frightening process and women are often unprepared for what may happen or what to do. A miscarriage is very pre-term labour and you may experience contractions.

This guide sheet provides information for what to expect and steps to take.

If you have seen a doctor and they have given you specific information, please follow their directions.

1. Stock up on painkillers and sanitary pads. Do not use tampons, (there is an increased risk of infection). You are very likely to experience severe cramping and extensive blood loss.



2. Some hospitals now have miscarriage cradles in which to collect your baby. However if they do not, it is still possible if you use a sieve or container when you go to the toilet to capture any clots. This may be required for testing, in order to establish the cause of your loss. You may also want to have your baby cremated or buried.



NB: if your toilet has an automatic flush, cover this with a piece of paper to stop it activating.

3. Rinse away the blood from your baby. If it's a very early pregnancy, it may not be easy to find your baby and you may wish to keep all large clots.



4. Put your baby and any other large clots gathered into a container. This may be required for testing to understand why you experienced the miscarriage.



Following the Independent Pregnancy Loss Review published on 22 July 2023, a new receptacle has been designed for use in hospital settings, but may not be available everywhere, you may also not have time to get to the hospital. There should also be a cold storage facility in most Early Pregnancy Units (EPU) so you will not be expected to keep your baby in your home refrigerator, if you are not happy to do this. However, this may take time to implement in all EPU's and this may not be accessible at certain times, overnight or weekends for example.

You may want to bring your baby to the funeral home. This will need to be kept in a fridge until you are able to bring it.

5. Call your GP; Early Pregnancy Unit (EPU); Fertility Clinic or Recurrent Miscarriage Clinic to let them know what has happened. They may want to arrange for testing.

Currently testing occurs after 3 recurrent losses. However, the Pregnancy Loss Review recommends that testing occur earlier. The UK Government have responded recognising that this is required but that it will require significant funding. However it does encourage clinicians to request testing at their discretion.

If you wish to, call your local funeral home to discuss arrangements.



6. Your body has just been through a traumatic event, so try to get as much rest as you can over the next few days. You may carry on bleeding for several weeks.

You may want to take time off work. Each organisation will have their own Compassionate Leave Policy. Unfortunately you do not qualify for Parental Bereavement Leave payment. You may need to take time off sick, but please do state it is Pregnancy-related sickness, since this will ensure it cannot be used against you in any way.

7. Emotionally, you have just lost a baby and will be devastated. Your feelings are valid. It is never too early to grieve a baby you were carrying.

You may find you want to talk to someone who understands. There are some great organisations who can support you, some of these are listed below, as well as therapists local to you.

8. In the UK, from October 2023 you will be able to request a Government Certificate of Baby Loss. This will give formal recognition of your baby but will not be a legal document and will not provide evidence of the parents' identity. You can request this via Gov.UK

For more information; support and guidance in the UK, please see the websites of the below organisations.

