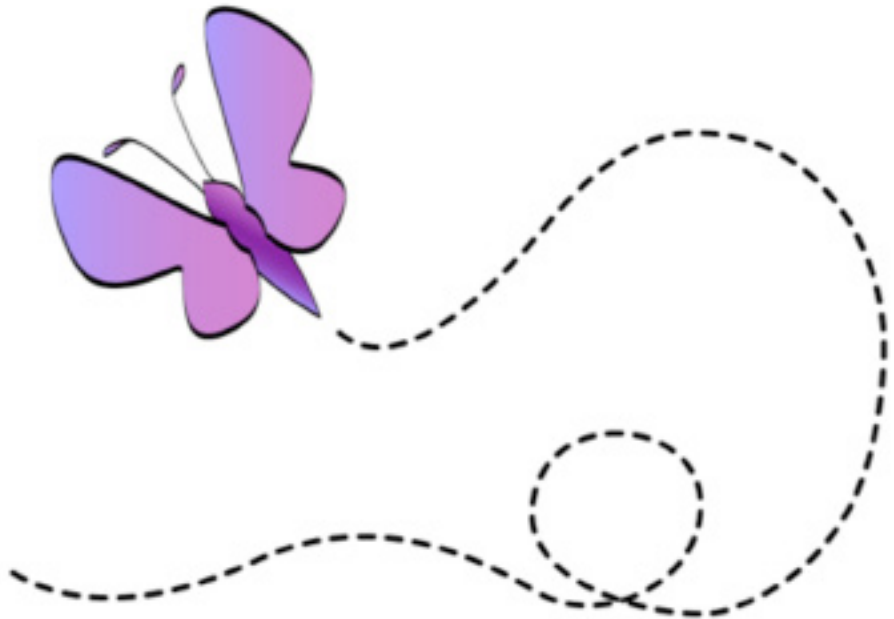




# Pregnancy Loss Support Group

Information for patients  
Maternity Services



# CONTACTS

Contact Midwife/Nurse: .....

Contact Number:.....

We are sorry for your loss.

This can be a distressing experience not only for yourself but also for your partner.

We hope this leaflet will help answer some of the questions you may have and help explain how you may feel now and in the future.

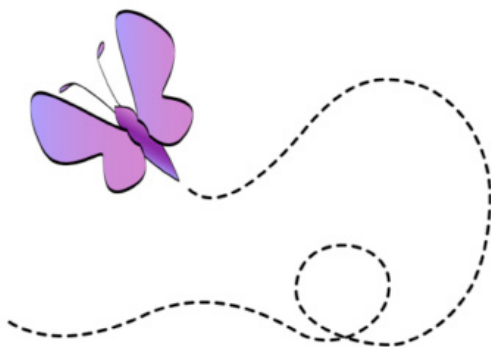
There are different types of miscarriage and we have included a short explanation of the particular type you have experienced.

While we prefer to talk of a miscarriage, you may see or hear the word abortion. This is the medical term for a miscarriage and in no way implies any suggestion of a deliberate termination of pregnancy.

## PREGNANCY LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

First Monday of the Month

- ❖ February
- ❖ April
- ❖ June
- ❖ August
- ❖ October
- ❖ December



## COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED

### Q. Why did I lose my baby?

A. It is usually impossible to find reasons for individual miscarriages; however, we know that complications with baby's development or the afterbirth can be the cause..

### Q. Could anything I did have caused it?

A. Not usually. Most women experience a feeling of guilt after a miscarriage, thinking of some event which they feel could have caused it to happen, however it is unlikely that you could have done anything to cause or prevent it.

### Q. What sex was my baby?

A. It is usually impossible to tell this unless you miscarried later in pregnancy (after about sixteen weeks).

### Q. How long will I bleed?

A. The bleeding should gradually decrease over the first seven to ten days and stop within four weeks. You should contact your GP if your bleeding becomes heavier and if you continue to bleed beyond four weeks.

Your periods will normally return within four to six weeks but this can vary.

### Q. Why are my breasts sore?

A. You may produce some breast milk if you miscarry after about 14 weeks of pregnancy. Taking a mild painkiller such as paracetamol and wearing a good supportive bra helps and the feeling usually eases in a few days.

### Q. How soon can we try for another baby?

A. You can produce an egg (ovulate) at any time after a miscarriage, so you could conceive if you have unprotected intercourse.

There is no medical reason why you cannot try straight away. Emotionally, you may not feel ready to try again for several months. It can be very difficult to cope with the loss of one pregnancy and the anticipation of a new one at the same time. It can be useful to wait until your next normal period in order that you can 'date' your next pregnancy.

You may resume intercourse before this if you wish (usually after about two weeks) but you may not be really interested in sexual activity yet and this is quite normal.

If you wish to try for another baby as soon as you feel able, then it is wise to use a barrier method of contraception (sheath or cap) until then, as they do not interfere with your normal fertility. If you used a cap previously then you should arrange to have this refitted.

## **IMMEDIATE FEELINGS**

When you started to miscarry you may have felt both frightened and helpless as there was nothing you could do to prevent it happening.

Now you will possibly be experiencing a variety of emotions, such as anger, sadness, disbelief and guilt. These are all normal feelings and are a result of needing to grieve for the baby that you have lost.

It is important for you to express your feelings and not to bottle them up. It helps if you can share them with your partner as they too are likely to be upset, not only about the baby but also for the distress you have experienced.

## **RELATIVES AND FRIENDS**

Most people find another person's loss and grief difficult to cope with. As a result they may avoid the subject for fear of either saying the wrong thing or of reminding you about it. Many women find this avoidance very hurtful and you may need to help relatives and friends cope with the situation by taking the initiative and talking openly to them about what has happened and how you are feeling.

## **CHILDREN**

If you have other children they may be worrying about what has happened to you and why you have been in hospital. They may be blaming themselves. It is important to take time and talk with them about what has happened and discuss each other's feelings.

## **CREATING MEMORIES**

When someone close to us dies we have our memories of that person to help us with our grief.

A miscarriage usually means that you have no memories of your baby as an individual; this can make it difficult for you to understand and cope with your grief. It is possible to try and create memories and you may wish to consider one, or all of the following ways.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

If you have miscarried later in pregnancy, from about 14-16 weeks onwards, then it may be possible to take photographs of your baby.

Even if you do not wish to have these at present they will be kept safe should you change your mind in the future.

## **BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE**

You might like to make an entry in the Book of Remembrance which is kept in the Quiet Room in the Maternity Unit at University Hospital Wishaw. There is also a remembrance book available in the 'Sanctuary' at University Hospital Hairmyres.

Please feel free to ask any member of staff if you would like to visit the room and see the book before making your decision. An entry can be made no matter how early in pregnancy you miscarried.

## **PRE-VIABLE CERTIFICATE**

One of these certificates can be completed by your midwife for you to take home with you should you wish.

They have no legal status but can help to provide you with a lasting reminder of your baby's existence.

### Memorial Service

NHS Lanarkshire hold a Memorial Service every year for parents who have experienced the loss of a pregnancy. This Memorial Service is held in The Sanctuary at University Hospital Wishaw. If you would like more information please contact any member of staff in the maternity unit.

You do not have to decide at present if you are unsure about any of these options but can contact your midwife/nurse (her name is inside the front cover) or someone from the support group at any time in the future.

## **PRE-CONCEPTION CARE**

Nearly all women who have experienced pregnancy loss are desperate to become pregnant again and this waiting can cause a build-up of tension and a feeling that time is being wasted. One way of making the time more bearable is to concentrate on becoming as fit and healthy as possible. Not just the mother, the father is equally important.

There is evidence to suggest that a couples' way of life (the things they do, the food they eat) can have an important influence on their baby's health, even before they are conceived. This includes the advice that all women who are planning a pregnancy should take Folic Acid as a daily medical or food supplement from when they plan to have a baby until the twelfth week of pregnancy.

It is natural that when you become pregnant again that you will feel anxious. You should visit your GP as soon as you suspect that you are pregnant so that you can be referred early for ante-natal care. Any appropriate investigations such as scans can then be considered. This can help to allay some of the fears you may have.

We hope this leaflet has been helpful.

If you wish to discuss anything further, either now or in the future, then please speak to your midwife (contact name inside front page) or to one of the midwives from the Support Group. You may find it helpful to talk to others who have had a similar experience. If so, then please come along to the “Pregnancy Loss Support Group” either by yourself or with your partner or a friend.

In addition to our own support group there is also the National Miscarriage Association. This is a registered charity that aims to provide information and support to women and their families during and after miscarriage.

The association publishes a series of information leaflets covering different aspects of miscarriage and quarterly newsletters (free to members).

If you want to become a member or would like more information about the association then please contact:

**Miscarriage Association:**

Telephone: 01924 200799

Website: [www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

Address: Miscarriage Association

Clayton Hospital

Northgate

Wakefield WF1 3JS

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