

# A Guide to Early Pregnancy Loss

Miscarriage, missed miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, blighted ovum, or molar pregnancy

We are deeply sorry for your loss. You did nothing to cause this, and **it is not your fault**. Your choices and grieving process are up to you.

## Know Your Options

### Non-Medical

Let the process of miscarriage occur naturally if you're in the first trimester of your pregnancy and this option is safe for you. This process can often happen at home.

Here are examples of what you may experience:

- No defined timeline; the process could take days or weeks.
- Symptoms worse than a heavy period, with severe cramping to labor pains.
- May see fetal tissue if far along enough—  
Ask your medical provider or hospital if they have a collection kit for you to use at home.

### Medical

Your options will depend on several factors, such as how far along you are in your pregnancy.

Here are some treatment options that may be available:

- **Vaginal or oral medication**—This can be taken at home or outpatient. If you're in the first trimester of your pregnancy, the medicine will cause the uterus to contract. You then experience what is worse than a heavy period, with severe cramping to labor pains. If in the second trimester of your pregnancy, the medicine will start labor and lead to vaginal delivery.
- **Dilation and curettage (D&C)**—An outpatient procedure that is done in the first trimester. During the procedure, your cervix is dilated or opened, and the tissue in the uterus is removed.
- **Dilation and evacuation (D&E)**—Similar to a D&C, but done in the second trimester.

## *Advocate for Yourself if in a Medical Setting*

This is a suggested list of requests to make or topics to discuss when you are in the hospital or clinic for your procedure:

- An ultrasound before the procedure to have a keepsake image
- Pain management options that are available during the procedure (e.g. medication, anesthesia)
- Hand and footprints of your baby
- Request what you need to feel comfortable
- A room far from other patients to have a quiet space
- Options for handling pregnancy remains, especially for further testing, cremation, or burial

## **Ectopic Pregnancy**

Methotrexate injection(s) may be given if you're early in your pregnancy. The medication stops cells from growing, and your body absorbs the pregnancy. Sometimes, you may need surgery to remove the pregnancy or repair or remove the fallopian tube.

### Common Physical Symptoms Following Early Pregnancy Loss

- Breast milk production (lactation)
- Tender breasts
- Uterine cramping and bleeding
- Nausea and vomiting
- Postpartum sweats
- Tiredness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Gaining or losing a lot of weight
- Loss of appetite

### Common Responses after an Early Pregnancy Loss

- Depressed mood, sadness, irritability, anger, panic, or anxiety
- Feelings of insecurity, guilt, and low self-worth
- Flashbacks to the loss
- Difficulty remembering moments around the loss
- Struggling to concentrate, having recurring thoughts, being in a mental fog, or feeling disconnected from reality
- Sleeping too little or sleeping too much
- Having anxiety or panicking with healthcare visits

*Be kind to yourself and allow yourself to do what feels helpful.*

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## Helpful Tips after Early Pregnancy Loss

### In the next few days and weeks . . .

- name your baby.
- engage in a ritual or special practice to honor your pregnancy or baby.
- plan a memorial, cremation, or burial.
- meet your basic physical needs: eat, drink, sleep, move.
- ask relatives or friends for help with other needs—food delivery, chores, childcare.

### In the following months . . .

- share the news with friends and family.
- create an online or physical memorial, journal, or blog to share your story.
- join a virtual or in-person pregnancy loss support group.
- seek perinatal bereavement support from a professional.
- limit time on social media.
- prioritize your self care.
- protect your physical health—move your body, sleep and rest, eat well.
- find ways to hold a relationship with your baby.
- make a plan as your due date approaches.



For more information, resources, and support, scan or visit [Janesroom.org](https://janesroom.org).

