

When You've Lost a Baby:

Support and Gentle Next Steps After the Loss of a Baby in Pregnancy

Grief after pregnancy loss can be profoundly personal. This type of loss can feel invisible to others, yet it touches the deepest places of our heart. No matter when your loss occurred, you deserve both space to grieve and support as you find your way forward. There's no single right way to move through this, but these gentle ideas may help.

Gentle Steps to Consider

- Ask someone to help notify loved ones:** Let a friend or family member take the lead on phone calls or messages if it feels too hard to do yourself.
- If your baby was delivered:** You may be asked about burial, cremation, or memory-making options. Some decisions may be time-sensitive, depending on hospital policies. You don't have to decide everything right away, and staff can help walk you through what's available. Some families find comfort in keepsakes, footprints, or photographs.

 **Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep** offers remembrance photography at no cost. To find a photographer in your area: www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org

- Request help at work or school:** Ask about leave policies, excused absences, or extensions. You don't need to share details unless you want to.
- Prioritize Self Care:** Your body may still be healing physically, so it's important to talk to your healthcare provider about symptoms to watch for, medications you may need, and follow-up visits. Taking time to nourish your body with simple, whole foods, getting outside for fresh air and sunshine, and doing gentle movement have been shown to improve mental health.
- Let others step in:** If you have other children or pets, allow someone you trust to help with care so you can rest, take the time you need to care for yourself, and grieve.
- Talk to a chaplain or pastor:** They can pray with you, offer comfort, or help lead the type of service you would like to honor your baby.

When You're Ready

Gather documents: After a loss, you may receive important paperwork such as medical records, and in some cases, certificates related to the loss. Because hospital stays are often filled with providers and social workers coming in and out, it can be challenging to keep track of everything. Ask for help if you're unsure and keep these documents somewhere safe for later use with insurance, work leave or remembrance.

Seek emotional support: Support groups (local or virtual), therapy, or spiritual care can help you feel less alone in your grief.

Think about how you want to remember your baby: Every family honors their baby differently. Here are some ideas, but know there's no right or wrong way. Do what feels best for you and your family.

 **Name your baby:** For some this is comforting.

 **Some families choose to take photographs of their baby**

 **Keepsakes:** Hospitals often provide keepsake boxes that may include footprints, handprints, photos, a blanket, or a small lock of hair. These can become treasured possessions, though what is offered varies by location.

 **Milk donation:** Some mothers find comfort in donating milk as a way to honor their baby. This is a personal choice, and support is available through your healthcare provider or local milk banks if you'd like to explore it.

 **Plant a tree in their honor**

 **Wear personalized jewelry with their initials**

 **Contribute to a cause in their memory**

 **Set aside a special day of remembrance for your baby**



Grief often comes in waves, especially near significant dates or milestone moments. Sharing your grief and story can create the opportunity for others to come alongside you.

Support for You and Your Family

- **You are not alone:** Many families have experienced pregnancy loss. Though it may feel isolating, support is out there.
- **It's okay to ask for help:** It's really normal for it to feel vulnerable and hard when sharing your needs, yet it's important to let someone know if you're struggling. **We heal in community, by being seen and known by others.**
- **Extend grace to others:** Though people mean well, oftentimes they don't know what to say and their words can be unintentionally hurtful. Remember that you don't owe anyone details or an explanation of your loss and you only need to share what you feel comfortable sharing. **It's okay to set boundaries**, change the subject, or let someone else handle conversations if you need to distance yourself from a situation.
- **Grief looks different for each person.** Some express it outwardly and through tears, others hold it quietly. These differences can create tension or distance, even in the most love-filled relationships. Be gentle with yourself and with one another. **There is no one right way to grieve.**
- **If you feel overwhelmed or unsafe, reach out:** You can text or call 988 for 24/7 mental health support. You can also talk to a pastor, trusted friend, or a licensed therapist. **You shouldn't carry this alone.**

Helpful Organizations and Resources

- **Hope Mommies:** A faith-based organization offering grief retreats, support groups, and resources specific to infant loss. Visit: www.hopemommies.org
- **Through It All | Grief Connection:** Our peer-to-peer support program offered by churches in our partner network. Reach out by email to find support in your area: info@throughitall.com, or visit: www.throughitall.com

As you walk this journey, may you know you are not alone, and that both your grief and your love matter. God meets us tenderly in our sorrow, even when words are hard to find. Whether you lean on prayer, the support of your community, or quiet moments of rest, may you give yourself permission to move slowly and gently—one day at a time.