

Another Baby?

After your baby died, whether it was a miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death, you need extra care and sensitivity as you think about another pregnancy. You may have times when you either feel the need to have another baby right away to fill your empty arms, or you may be afraid to ever try again. You may experience a rollercoaster of emotion and confusion; the accompanying decision-making process is complicated. Also getting pregnant may not be that simple, nor is it easy living through another pregnancy or having another baby.

How do you decide when or if you are ready? There is no simple or perfect answer because of the complexity of loss and a possible new pregnancy. No one else can know what is right for you and your partner. Trust yourselves about the timing and decision to try again or the decision to not try again.

Some questions that you might ask yourselves in considering another pregnancy or no more children are:

- Does the loss of my baby(s) still consume my every thought?
- Am I obsessed with becoming pregnant again?
- Can I think of my loss without it tearing me apart?
- Am I expecting another baby to make me “feel better”?
- Is my biological clock running out?
- Is adoption or no additional pregnancies something we have to decide if infertility is an issue between my partner and myself?
- Am I physically ready to go through another pregnancy?
- Psychologically are we ready to face the complexities of another pregnancy?
- How are we communicating as a couple?
- What are my partner's thoughts and feelings on the matter?
- Did we come to this decision together?

Allowing yourself time to think and communicate about these and other questions thoroughly is important, particularly as a recent loss may have left you numb or with difficulty making decisions. Again, no one can or should make your decision for you, but giving yourselves some time, will help you in making the decision that is right for you.

While another pregnancy may or may not be your decision, it takes courage to dare to hope and love again - of dreaming new dreams and planning what your future family may look like.

If you are trying to get pregnant or are pregnant, these tips may assist you in getting through the next nine months.

- Find a way to vent feelings, such as keeping a journal.
- Talk with others who have suffered a loss and then had another baby.
- Talk with others who haven't suffered a loss to remind yourself that most pregnancies do end happily.
- Ask your medical provider what precautions you and they will take, and what additional tests may be necessary or recommended.
- Feel free to get a second opinion if you have doubts or concerns.
- Try to find a support group and/ or seek counseling.
- Be honest about your feelings and be aware that it is normal to have anxiety.
- You are at a higher risk, even if only emotionally. You deserve to be treated with more care by your medical provider. Advocate for yourself or have your partner advocate for you.
- If you have doubts or are worried about your pregnancy, at any time, call your medical provider.
- Ask what subtle signs to watch for this time that might signal a problem, if applicable.
- You and your partner may handle a subsequent pregnancy differently. Talk about and respect these differences.
- You may feel the need to "do something different" this time. Feel free to make those changes if you feel more comfortable and if they are medically acceptable for you.
- Anxiety, stress, emotional difficulties, and grief are all normal feelings. Accept and acknowledge that these feelings you have are valid. It may be difficult to be "joyful or ecstatic" at this time because of your fears and past experiences. That's okay!
- Try to relax and work on having positive and hopeful feelings, even if they do not come naturally.
- Appreciate each day that you share with your growing baby, as hard as that may be. Talk with your baby, sing to your baby, and get to know your baby!
- Education and awareness can help one feel more in control. Understand more about your body and your pregnancy.
- Follow and trust your instincts. Take control of the things you can, and accept what you can't.
- Have hope and faith that this pregnancy will result in a healthy baby.