



### Trying Again

There is no right or wrong time to try again for another baby. Your midwife or doctor may have told you to wait for a certain amount of time. Once that time is up you may still feel hesitant. This is normal and it may be that you wait until the time feels right for you and your partner before you try again.



### Subsequent Pregnancy

A subsequent pregnancy following a loss can be a nerve-wracking and emotional experience. You have lost the innocence and naivety around pregnancy, and you know that things can go wrong. It can help if you are in good physical condition, and try to remain positive. Often it can be helpful to talk to others who have been through a loss and have had a successful subsequent pregnancy to help reduce any fears or worries you may have.



### Who can I talk to?

Sands groups throughout New Zealand run support meetings in the community and are able to talk to you one to one in person, on the phone or by email. We support parents and families following the loss of a baby at any stage in pregnancy around birth or as an infant. Many of our groups hold regular support meetings which you are welcome to attend – we are clear that there's no measurement around loss, we're all there because we miss and love our babies, no matter when or how they died, so please feel very welcome to come along.



# Sands

Sands New Zealand is a network of parent-run, non-profit groups supporting families who have experienced the death of a baby. We have over 25 groups around the country.

All of the people involved in Sands give their time and energy voluntarily - we are not a government funded organisation. We do not have any paid staff. Most of our members/supporters are also bereaved parents.

To find your local Sands group visit [www.sands.org.nz/supportgroups.html](http://www.sands.org.nz/supportgroups.html)

We also provide a closed bereaved parent chat page on facebook – [www.facebook.com/groups/SandsNewZealand.Bereaved.Parents/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/SandsNewZealand.Bereaved.Parents/)



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# Sands

# Early Loss

A little life,  
Not a little loss

## Hearing The News

We are sorry that you have to read this information, and hope that it can offer a little support during this difficult time. We understand your hopes and dreams may be shattered and emotions may be raw.

An early loss of a pregnancy is one of the most difficult times that a family can experience. It has been said that it's the loneliest grief of all, as it can be so sudden, there is often no body to hold, and often no funeral to say goodbye. Often you may not have told people that you were pregnant, so it becomes a complex task to explain to others that you have had a miscarriage when they didn't even know you were pregnant.

Miscarriage in New Zealand is defined as a pregnancy that ends spontaneously before 20 weeks gestation. Pregnancy or baby loss after 20 weeks gestation is defined as a stillbirth.

## The Early Days

As with a loss at any gestation, the loss of a baby is often physically and emotionally painful. It is likely that you will feel very tired, and have very little energy. You may experience continued bleeding for up to three weeks, however this should get lighter. If this does not, then please seek help from a medical professional.

Rest up as much as you can, especially in the first few days. If possible take some time off work, or have someone else assist if you have any other children in your care.

When you miscarry, it is likely that you will experience cramping, and contractions, these are normal, and can last several days as your body settles down.

This is also the case if you have had a dilation and curettage (D&C) performed in hospital. Often wheat bags, hot water bottles or over the counter medications can be effective at helping reduce the physical pain.

Depending on the stage of your pregnancy, and when your baby passed away, your baby may be intact, or may have started to deteriorate. A baby of under 12 weeks gestation is very small, and may be impossible to detect within the tissue and placenta that you would deliver. You may wish to receive your baby's remains and bury them somewhere special.

In New Zealand you may bury the remains of a baby under 20 weeks wherever you choose. Some parents bury their baby under a tree or plant in their garden or in a planter or pot if they wish to take their baby's remains with them if they move.

Your local funeral home would be able to assist if you would like to discuss cremation.

## Grieving After A Loss

There is no 'normal' when it comes to grief, especially after the loss of a baby. The loss of the hopes and dreams you had for that child is not something that can be easily fixed.

Sometimes you may feel expectations around grieving for your baby – our society tends to measure grief by the length of life or the size of the baby. There may also be expectations around how long you are entitled to grieve.

Your grief is yours and everything you feel around the loss of this baby is normal for you. Grief is individual and the way we express it is too. If this baby was important to you then your grief will reflect that.

## Things That May Help

Naming your baby, holding a remembrance service, planting a tree, or creating a garden, create a memory box, with scans, keepsakes, pregnancy tests or other mementoes, filling out a Certificate of Life, which is available from your local Sands group. If your baby was born prior to 20 weeks gestation, and weighing less than 400grams, then you are not required to register the death of your baby. We understand it can be hard not having that final closure of a death certificate, so we offer an alternative that you can complete.

## Men Hurt Too

An early loss can be extremely difficult for a man to understand. They have still lost a child, however their grief may be completely different to that of the mother. As fathers have no physical connection with the baby, they often don't start to form a bond until they have seen scan images, felt kicks, or sometimes not until after the baby is born. As with any loss, this is when it is important for a couple to be aware of each others' feelings and grief. Talking and sharing feelings may help to ease any strain on the relationship, or seeking out a supportive and empathetic friend or family member.

## Recurrent Early Loss

In New Zealand, approximately one in four pregnancies will end in an early loss. Unfortunately, some women will experience a number of losses before they can sustain a successful pregnancy. It is important to let your doctor know if you have experienced an early loss. In most areas, if you experience three successive losses you will be referred to your nearest High Risk clinic at which you'll be able to be monitored closely.