

What will my healthcare team do?

Your healthcare team can answer many of the medical questions you may have regarding the pregnancy loss. They are also able to provide some support and referrals to counselling to help you cope with the loss.

If you have experienced a stillbirth, the hospital may:

- Suggest performing some tests or an autopsy to find out why the stillbirth occurred
- Provide information on [registering your baby and applying for a birth certificate](#)
- Provide information about financial support from Centrelink
- Provide information about organising the funeral

What can I do?

There is no right or wrong way to cope with a pregnancy loss. Some women and their partners find it distressing and some don't. What's important is letting yourself have the time and space to process it as needed.

If you feel you need support, talk to your GP about who to contact or who they can refer you to.

If your pregnancy loss occurred in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy (miscarriage)

Many women who miscarry do so at home or are sent home for the miscarriage to complete. You may be asked to look at what is being passed to make sure the miscarriage has completed. This might be by looking at your pad or in the toilet.

Depending on how many weeks pregnant you were, you may be able to identify the products of conception which include the fetus, sac, and placenta. [Pregnancy, Birth, and Baby](#) has information on what you may see based on how many weeks pregnant you were. This can be very distressing for some people and there may be a question about what to do with the products of conception. On some occasions, you may be asked to collect this in a container given to you for testing. You may be told to dispose of what you find.

In NSW, you are not legally required to have a funeral, burial or cremation, and South Western Sydney Local Health District does not require you to collect the products of conception or provide them to your pregnancy care provider. If you feel comfortable to do so, you can dispose of these in the toilet, or by wrapping them up in your sanitary pad.

You may choose to keep the products of conception or hold a private burial/cremation. You can also provide them to your local hospital to cremate them. If you need to have a [dilatation and curettage](#), you can ask the service to keep the pregnancy tissue for you to take home.

While the birth and death of your baby cannot be formally registered, you are able to apply for a recognition of early pregnancy loss certificate. You will need to complete a form and have it signed by your GP or midwife. There is no cost for this certificate, [find out more on the NSW Government website](#).

If your pregnancy loss occurred later than 20 weeks of pregnancy (stillbirth)

Giving birth to your stillborn can be deeply traumatic. While you will have significant support from the hospital team during this time, there are a few things to consider:

- Many people choose to spend time with their baby. Research has shown seeing the baby can assist with the grieving process. It may seem scary, but most parents find it helps them
- You may want to take a reminder such as a lock of hair or baby's name card from the hospital cot
- Do not feel rushed to have a funeral straight away, you can visit your baby until the funeral occurs

Coping with pregnancy loss

What supports are available?

Sands is an independent organisation that provides support for newborn death, stillbirth, and miscarriage. They provide phone support anytime, seven days a week.

sands.org.au

Phone: 1300 072 637

Pregnancy, Birth and Baby provides trusted advice and emotional support from a qualified midwife/maternal child health nurse, 7am - midnight, 7 days a week.

pregnancybirthbaby.org.au

Phone: 1800 882 436

Bears Of Hope provides grief support and care for families who experience the loss of their baby. This includes grief workshops, online support, and phone support.

bearsofhope.org.au

Phone: 1300 11 4673 (1300 11 HOPE)

Where can I learn more?

NSW Health Early pregnancy - when things go wrong: health.nsw.gov.au

NSW Government Miscarriage, stillborn and loss of a newborn: nsw.gov.au

Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Pregnancy loss: pregnancybirthbaby.org.au

The Pink Elephants Support Group Miscarriage support: pinkelephants.org.au

Pregnancy Loss Australia Support and guidance for miscarriage: pregnancylossaustralia.org.au

Sands Miscarriage, stillborn and newborn death support: sands.org.au

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory
factsheets are endorsed by South
Western Sydney PHN's Community
Advisory Committee and local GPs

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