

Prenatal Education

Key Messages for Ontario



Pregnancy and Infant Loss

Key Messages

Even though most pregnancies are problem-free, some pregnancies end in loss.

Even though most pregnancies are problem-free, it is estimated that one in four pregnancies ends in loss. The risk of miscarrying in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy is between 15 percent and 20 percent. It is less common for a loss to occur later in pregnancy.

It is important that women seek medical care right away in case of a miscarriage or stillbirth.

When a woman miscarries (the pregnancy ends spontaneously before 20 weeks' gestation) or has a stillbirth (gives birth to an infant with no signs of life at or after 20 weeks' gestation), she needs immediate medical care to prevent complications. There are increased risks of bleeding and/or infection, which may put the woman's health in danger.

If a woman has experienced the loss of a pregnancy or infant, a visit with her health care provider can provide support and information.

A health care provider may be able to:

- ▶ Help cope with grief.
- ▶ Explain why the pregnancy ended or why the baby did not survive.
- ▶ Discuss with the woman and her partner if and/or when they may want to become pregnant again.
- ▶ Explore the risk of this happening in a future pregnancy.
- ▶ Assist with accessing support or formal therapy.
- ▶ Help describe their loss to other siblings, family members, friends, and co-workers.

Learn more about pregnancy and infant loss.

The following are suggestions for where you can find more information about pregnancy and infant loss.

- ▶ Your local public health unit 1-866-532-3161
- ▶ Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network (PAIL Network) www.pailnetwork.ca
- ▶ Bereaved Families of Ontario (BFO) www.bereavedfamilies.net/index.htm
- ▶ oMama www.omama.com