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# UNDERSTANDING MISCARRIAGE

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5 Things You Need to Know

# UNDERSTAND MISCARRIAGE - 5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

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*We know that going through miscarriage brings up so many emotions - and a lot of confusion. We wanted to make access to information you can trust simpler and easier - so here are the five things we wish we had known when we experienced loss.*

## 1. MISCARRIAGE IS NEVER YOUR FAULT

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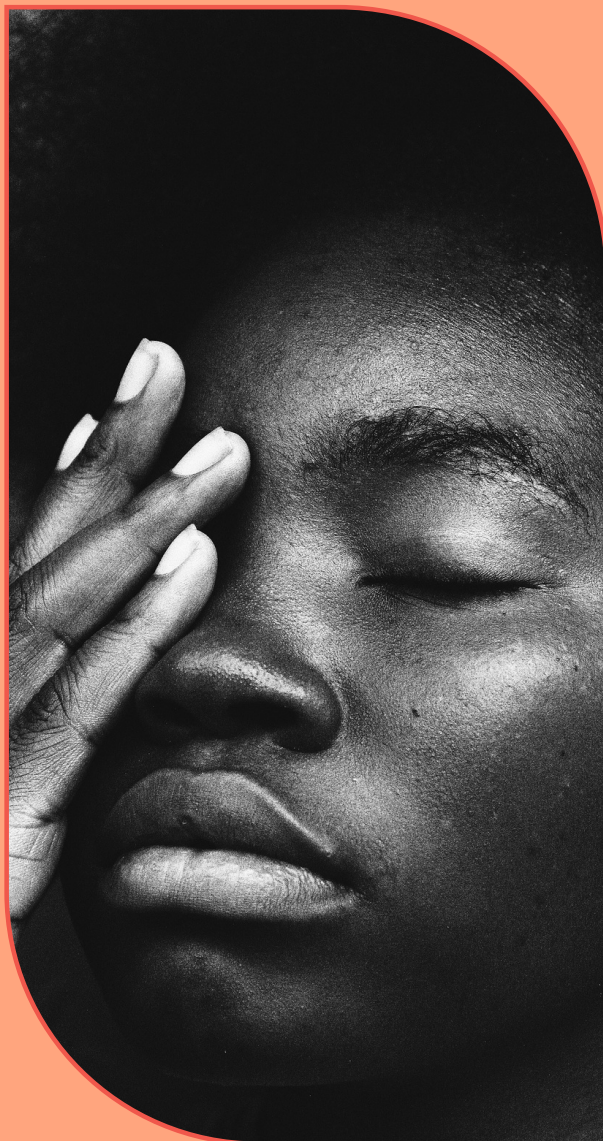
It's very common to blame yourself after a miscarriage, but pregnancy loss is never your fault. If you have recently experienced pregnancy loss, you are probably searching for reasons why - even if that means criticising every lifestyle decision you've made, from the accidental glass of wine you had, to the exercise class you went to.

But the scientific truth is that this loss likely had nothing to do with you or your lifestyle choices. The vast majority of miscarriages occur because there was a genetic 'misfire' at the moment of conception - and your body knew that this pregnancy would not develop into a healthy baby. Whilst that doesn't take away from the grief you may be experiencing, understanding the science behind miscarriage can help to ease some of the guilt and remind you that it wasn't your fault.



# THERE IS NOT MUCH YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT MISCARRIAGE

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The randomness of miscarriage makes it very hard to predict or prevent. But if you are trying to conceive or are pregnant again after loss, we totally understand you will be keen to do anything you can to help reduce the risk.

There are a few things that do seem to increase the risk of miscarriage including age, being overweight, smoking and consuming pesticides. These factors are all important to be aware of - and it never hurts to try and reach a healthy weight, eat organic foods or quit smoking. However, it's important to remember that none of this will guarantee a healthy pregnancy - and one cigarette won't cause a miscarriage - so try to take a healthy, balanced approach to any lifestyle adaptations you make.

Recently, more research around progesterone preventing miscarriage was published. We are still in the early stages of understanding exactly how helpful it is, but studies indicate that if you have had more than one miscarriage and you start bleeding, taking progesterone could increase your chance of bringing a healthy baby home by 9%. For this reason, many women who have experienced loss before are asking doctors to prescribe them progesterone as soon as they find out they are pregnant - and that's a totally healthy thing to do if it would make you feel more confident!

# IF YOU HAD A MISCARRIAGE BEFORE, THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT WILL HAPPEN AGAIN

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A pregnancy after a loss is never the same, and we understand that here at Parla. A time that should be full of joy and hope can instead be a rollercoaster of fear and anxiety. These feelings are totally understandable, but it's important to remember that the majority of people who experience pregnancy loss go on to have happy, healthy babies.

Looking at the statistics there is a slight increase in miscarriage risk if you have been through loss before. However, until you have had 5 consecutive miscarriages, the chance of you having a healthy baby is still higher than having another miscarriage - and that's an important fact to focus on when you are feeling anxious.

The NHS will not investigate until you have had 3 miscarriages, but that doesn't mean you can't share your concerns with your medical team if you are finding the fear hard to deal with.



# MISCARRIAGE HAS A PROVEN IMPACT ON YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

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Everyone understands that miscarriage is heartbreaking, but the true depth of its impact on our mental health is something that can be shocking, even for those going through it.

Everyone reacts differently to pregnancy loss, and some people do manage to move on fairly quickly. However for many people, they will struggle with some very complex emotions, and it could even trigger mental health issues. One study found that, one month following pregnancy loss, nearly a third of women (29%) suffered post-traumatic stress. In addition, nearly a quarter experienced moderate to severe anxiety and 11% had moderate to severe depression. Nine months later, 18% of the women involved in the study still reported symptoms of PTSD.

If you are struggling with mental health issues after pregnancy loss, know that you are not alone, there is nothing to be ashamed of and there is support out there.

# THE GRIEF YOU FEEL AFTER MISCARRIAGE IS VERY REAL - AND YOU DESERVE SUPPORT.

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Whether you experience mental health concerns or not, it is important to recognise that a miscarriage is a loss, a bereavement - no matter what stage of pregnancy you were at - and you are allowed to grieve. Sometimes it can feel like society tries to belittle miscarriages - "At least it was early" "At least you didn't lose an actual baby" - but every feeling you are going through is totally valid. This coupled with the fact that pregnancy loss is still shrouded in taboo can make it difficult for us to ask for help.

Like any grieving process, you will need support to get through it. Speak to your employer about taking time off, many companies are now putting pregnancy loss leave policies into place or will at least grant compassionate leave. Considering counseling or group therapy. Ensure you are open with your medical team about what you are going through. Whatever you need to move through your grief is the right thing for you - and there is nothing to be ashamed of when asking for it.





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# NEXT GRIEF AFTER LOSS COURSE STARTS 20TH OCTOBER

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