

## Overcoming Miscarriage: Understanding Causes, Pain and Support

Mikkola Tokay\*

Department of Reproductive Endocrinologists, University of Montreal, Montreal, Canada

### DESCRIPTION

A miscarriage, or sudden abortion, is the loss of a pregnancy before the 20<sup>th</sup> week. It's a Profound experience that affects many individuals and families, yet it is often surrounded by silence and stigma. It is estimated that about 10%-20% of known pregnancies end in miscarriage, but the accurate number could be higher since many early miscarriages occur before a woman even realizes that person is pregnant. Miscarriage can be an overwhelming experience, both physically and emotionally. Understanding the causes, the emotional impact, and how to seek support can help those affected navigate through a challenging time.

### Causes of miscarriage

In many cases, the exact cause of a miscarriage is unknown, but there are several factors that may contribute to pregnancy loss.

**Chromosomal abnormalities:** One of the most common causes of miscarriage, especially in the early stages, is chromosomal abnormalities in the fetus. These abnormalities often occur by chance and are not typically related to the health or lifestyle of the mother.

**Health conditions of the mother:** Certain medical conditions can increase the risk of miscarriage, such as uncontrolled diabetes, thyroid disorders, autoimmune diseases, or blood clotting disorders (e.g., antiphospholipid syndrome). Managing these conditions can sometimes reduce the risk of pregnancy loss.

**Age:** The risk of miscarriage increases with maternal age. Women over the age of 35 have a higher chance of chromosomal abnormalities, which in turn can increase the likelihood of miscarriage.

**Hormonal imbalances:** Hormonal imbalances, such as low progesterone levels, can interfere with the implantation and development of the pregnancy.

**Infections and illnesses:** Certain infections (such as *listeria*, rubella, or *cytomegalovirus*) and chronic conditions like untreated Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) can increase the risk of miscarriage.

**Lifestyle factors:** Smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, or drug use during pregnancy can increase the risk of miscarriage. Similarly, extreme stress, obesity, or being underweight can also contribute.

**Physical trauma:** While rare, severe physical trauma or injury can lead to miscarriage, especially in the first trimester.

**Uterine anomalies:** Structural abnormalities of the uterus, such as fibroids or septate uterus, can affect implantation and increase the risk of miscarriage.

### Healing after pregnancy loss: Finding support and coping strategies

Every person's experience with miscarriage is unique, and there is no "right" way to grieve. However, there are several strategies that can help individuals and couples navigate the emotional and physical aspects of this loss.

**Acknowledge the loss:** It's important to allow oneself to grieve. Miscarriage is a real loss, and it's normal to feel a wide range of emotions, from sadness to anger to confusion. Acknowledging the pain can be the first step toward healing.

**Seek support:** Talking to a partner, friends, family members, or a counselor can be incredibly helpful. Many people who have experienced miscarriage report feeling supported by others who listen without judgment. In some cases, support groups for individuals who have experienced pregnancy loss can provide a sense of community.

**Take time for self-care:** The physical recovery from a miscarriage can take time, and it's important to rest and take care of oneself. This may include physical rest, emotional support, and addressing any concerns with a healthcare provider.

**Understand your body's healing process:** Miscarriage can involve both physical and emotional recovery. Some women experience bleeding and cramping, while others may have a surgical procedure (such as a D and C) to clear the uterus. It's important to follow your doctor's advice and monitor for any complications, such as infection or excessive bleeding.

**Correspondence to:** Mikkola Tokay, Department of Reproductive Endocrinologists, University of Montreal, Montreal, Canada, Email: tokaykola00@gmail.com

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**Consider future family planning:** After a miscarriage, many women and couples are eager to try again, while others may need more time. There is no rush, and it's important to discuss next steps with a healthcare provider. In most cases, it's safe to try again after a few menstrual cycles, but this depends on individual circumstances.

### **When to seek medical advice**

Most miscarriages happen within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and do not require medical intervention. However, if you experience heavy bleeding, severe cramping, or signs of infection (such as fever, chills, or foul-smelling discharge), it's important to seek medical care promptly. For those who have recurrent miscarriages (defined as three or more consecutive losses), further investigation may be necessary to identify underlying

causes. A healthcare provider can run tests to evaluate for genetic factors, hormonal imbalances, or structural issues with the uterus.

### **CONCLUSION**

Miscarriage is a common but often heartbreaking experience, and its emotional and physical effects can be long-lasting. It's important to remember that, in most cases, miscarriages are not caused by anything the mother did wrong, and the chance of a successful pregnancy in the future is generally high. Seeking support, allowing time for healing, and taking steps to address any medical concerns can help individuals cope with the loss. If you or someone you know has experienced a miscarriage, know that you are not alone. It's okay to grieve, to seek help, and to take time to heal.