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A New Pregnancy



How soon to try?

You may find that all sorts of people - doctors, nurses, relatives and friends - give different advice about when you should think about trying to conceive again. Some may suggest that you try for another baby straight away, others that it's better to wait a while.

You may feel that all this conflicting advice just adds to your own confusion. The pain of your loss may have effected your relationship and make it hard to feel close enough to make love, and yet you may long for another baby.

In the end the decision when to try again is up to both bereaved parents to make together. Nevertheless, many people consider it is sensible for you to talk things through with your family doctor or obstetrician before trying again, particularly in certain circumstances. If the mother was ill during the last pregnancy, if she is now under the care of a doctor for some reason, or if the baby was delivered by Caesarean section. Also, if your baby died of a genetic disorder, or a condition which may occur again in future pregnancies you will need extra advice and help.

It is sensible for the woman to have at least one period before becoming pregnant. This shows that her body has returned to normal again, and helps her and the doctors tell when the next baby is due, once conceived.

Some people think that parents recover emotionally more quickly from the loss of a baby if they allow themselves some time to think about the dead baby - to say goodbye - before committing themselves to another pregnancy. For some this may be three months, for others anything up to a year or more.

small the problem seems. Most people understand that your experience of losing a baby naturally makes you anxious about the one you have now.

Some parents find it takes time to adjust to the new baby. If you don't 'love' him/her straight away it doesn't mean there is anything wrong with you. Everyone is different and you will come to love your baby in your own way, in your own time.

If, after several weeks or months, you still feel you are struggling to cope, go to your GP and explain your feelings. Just because you finally have a live baby in your arms, it does not mean that you are automatically not going to experience a period of post-natal depression.

This information was taken from Sands website at www.uk-sands.org

Next Pregnancy Support Group

At Fife Sands we understand how difficult a pregnancy after loss can be. We run monthly support groups for mums-to-be to help you. These meetings are held in conjunction with one of two experienced midwives who will be able to answer any queries or concerns you may have without the pressure or worry of ante-natal check-ups. A befriender who has had a subsequent pregnancy after loss is also present and can totally relate to what you are going through. Even if you have not made contact before now, but feel you would like some additional support, you will be more than welcome.

These meetings are held as required and can be in Dunfermline or Kirkcaldy—please email or phone for more details.

For these reasons many mothers find it useful to discuss contraception with their GP, midwife or health visitor while they decide what they should do.

For some parents, who conceived their previous child with fertility treatment, the decision to try again may be based on the emotional reserves they have to go through more treatment.

Getting pregnant

You may not become pregnant straight away. You may have conceived quickly last time, but the pattern could be different this time. No two pregnancies are the same. However if you have been trying for six months without success it is worth going to your doctor and asking for advice.

Being pregnant

The next pregnancy after loss is usually an emotional roller coaster of anticipation and worry. The father, in particular, may feel helpless. He may have taken a back seat during the previous pregnancy but have views about how this next pregnancy is handled.

Returning to the same maternity unit where your previous baby died can be especially hard. It may bring back very vivid memories of your loss as well as a sense that history is repeating itself. Some parents say they find it hard to imagine having a live baby when they have been through the trauma of losing a baby.

Some parents prefer to go back to the same unit because staff know them there; others feel that they have lost trust in the unit and would rather find another hospital. For some the decision may be purely emotional.

If your partner can't come with you to antenatal appointments, ask a family member, friend or someone from Sands to accompany you. Try calling the sister in charge of the clinic (or ask someone else to) the day before your appointment and tell her how you feel. She may be able to arrange for someone to meet you or at least make sure that a teardrop sticker (Sands sticker which indicates you have experienced the death of a baby) is attached to your notes so that her staff are aware of your loss.

Spend time together with your partner before you go to the clinic, and write down all the questions you might want to ask.

Antenatal care

If there was an identifiable complication in your previous pregnancy, you may be considered high risk for your next pregnancy. This will obviously be extremely stressful for you. If, however, staff do not consider you 'high risk', this can also be hard, because you may feel that you *should* be considered high risk.

Even if staff say that you have nothing to fear, do not be afraid to voice your fears and ask what extra scans or monitoring you can expect. Some parents feel that asking for reassurance is 'being a nuisance' and wasting hospital time. It is not. Doctors, nurses and midwives say again and again that they would much rather know if patients are anxious. If your last baby died in its 35th week, say, this may be a particularly anxious time for the current pregnancy.

Staff should have attached Sands teardrop (or other) stickers to the pages of your notes so that anyone seeing your notes, knows immediately you have experienced a loss. If, for any reason, they have not, suggest they contact Sands to obtain the stickers.

Antenatal classes

Some parents find it very hard to attend standard antenatal classes for a subsequent pregnancy. This can leave an information gap - if you have no other children, and lost your previous baby before you'd completed all your antenatal classes. Your hospital may be able to offer you individual sessions. As your pregnancy advances you may wish to discuss your birth plan. The more prepared you are, the less anxious you will be.

The anniversary of your previous baby's death may fall at some point during your pregnancy or even close to the birth of your new baby. This will be a particularly hard time. Make sure that midwives or anyone caring for you is aware of any anxiety you feel.

A new baby

Having a new baby is an emotional roller coaster at the best of times. If you have lost a baby, the arrival of another baby can bring a range of complex emotions.

Your new baby may look like your previous baby or be the same sex as the baby that died. You may be happy your baby is here but sad about the things you were not able to do with your previous baby. You may feel bewildered and guilty at the possibility of a happy outcome. You may feel you need to hide any sadness because everyone wants so much for you to be happy. People may say things that are hurtful, suggesting that your new baby is somehow a replacement for the baby that died. All these emotions will be compounded by lack of sleep and the demands that a new baby makes on any parent.

You may find yourself being so anxious about your new baby's wellbeing you need lots of advice and reassurance from your doctor or health visitor. Don't struggle on alone no matter how