

Planning Another Pregnancy

red
nose



“I wanted to try straight away, but my partner wasn’t ready yet. It put our relationship under a lot of stress.”

- Danielle

Pregnancy should be an exciting time in the life of expectant parents, but when a previous pregnancy has resulted in the death of your baby, a new pregnancy can bring many intense and varied emotions.

You may feel excited at the thought of conceiving again but at the same time feel grief for the baby who died, and anxiety about the likelihood of a successful pregnancy. This is normal.

Perhaps you also hope that becoming pregnant again will help you get over your baby who died. Many parents feel desperate to get on with having another baby quickly to fill the void of their loss. In reality, another pregnancy rarely takes away the pain of grief.

Is it time to try again?

The time it takes to adjust to a baby’s death varies from person to person; there is no ‘standard’ time frame. For mothers, giving yourself enough time to recover physically and emotionally can help you build more strength and confidence to manage the next pregnancy. For some, getting pregnant again straight after the death of a baby may lead to difficulties coping emotionally. This is because the grieving process can sometimes be put ‘on hold’ as your thoughts focus on the new pregnancy. If this grief is not processed appropriately, a resurgence of grief can accompany the birth of another child. Waiting until both parents have healed emotionally can smooth the transition and assist in the formation of healthy bonding with their new baby. It’s worthwhile to discuss your situation with a health professional.

“Everybody said that we should wait at least a few months, because otherwise it was like we were trying to replace Bianca. I resented people for telling us what to do. They had no idea what it was like.”

- Bradley

Things to consider

If you are having medical or genetic investigations related to the loss of your baby, you may want or be advised to wait a little while before trying to conceive.

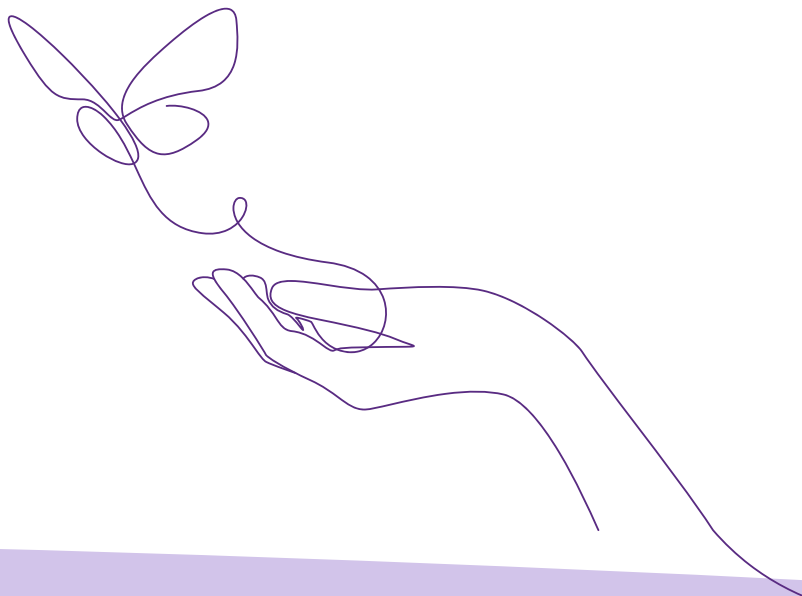
If you are older parents or you have experienced fertility issues, you may be concerned about leaving another pregnancy too long. If you have other children, it is also important to consider their emotional needs. They may also need time to recover from the loss of their sibling.

If you do decide to try again, be aware that a new pregnancy will often generate discussion about your previous pregnancy loss. Prepare yourself to have those conversations with your child.

Remember to care for yourselves and each other as partners. It may take some time to conceive again and may intensify your emotions of failure and disappointment. Recognise that each of you will respond to these intense emotions differently. Try to be accepting, understanding and supportive.

“Our son’s birth didn’t make everything better; but he is helping us to heal in a beautiful, life-affirming way.”

- Ignatius



During the pregnancy

Pregnancy can be challenging for many parents, but this can be magnified when you've already experienced the loss of a baby. Once becoming pregnant, continue to make a conscious effort to look after yourselves and each other both physically and emotionally.

Managing anxiety

The sense of anticipation about the baby may be darkened by anxiety about things that could go wrong. There are many support options to help you manage your anxiety including

- online support groups
- professional counselling
- additional monitoring from a health professional

Developing a good relationship with your maternity health care professional can also help you deal with the physical and emotional aspects of your new pregnancy. More frequent visits and scans with your doctor can help to alleviate anxiety during the pregnancy. It is normal not to feel fully emotionally invested in a subsequent pregnancy. This is considered a defense mechanism to protect oneself from grief associated with another loss, even if these feelings seem irrational.

Family and friends may be delighted for you both and may offer their love and support. Some of them may not fully understand that, although you are pleased and excited about the new pregnancy, you are experiencing mixed emotions. If you are having trouble explaining your mixed feelings to the people who care about you, a Red Nose parent supporter or professional counsellor may be able to offer suggestions about how to approach things. A full-term pregnancy can seem like a lifetime, so it can help to set the smaller milestones to focus on; and not just related to your pregnancy. Try to spend time with your family and friends and do things that you really enjoy.

When the baby comes

Sometimes the joy of the birth of a healthy baby is mixed with sad memories of the baby who died. Parents may experience a heightened sense of grief, regardless of how long they waited before getting pregnant again. These mixed emotions, while normal, may be misunderstood by others. However, allow yourself to recognise and accept these feelings.

When you are holding your new baby in your arms, the enormity of your previous loss may finally sink in. You may find yourself crying for the baby you don't have while kissing and cuddling your new baby.

Make sure you have lots of support around you when you bring your new baby home. You will need to adjust to the daily routines of caring for a new baby, and you will still have your grief to contend with, which may have been intensified by the birth of your newest baby.

After the birth of a new baby, some people may not understand why you can't forget the baby who died. This maybe very upsetting for you. No matter how many more children you have or how much time passes, you will always remember your baby who died. Treasure these memories and know that your love for your precious baby will never fade.

Where to go for more help

Many parents find it helpful to discuss their own situation and feelings about another pregnancy with a hospital social worker, a grief counsellor or a counselling service. Bereaved parents also find that talking with other parents who have had a baby die is very helpful. Our volunteer parent supporters understand what you are feeling.

“I spoke to a Red Nose parent supporter. At first, I felt silly, because this baby hadn't died - she was alive and kicking inside of me. But they reassured me that all my strange and sometimes scary emotions were normal.”

- Alice

“I couldn't stop crying when I held Amelia for the first time. I think the staff must have thought I was crazy. I had so much joy for her birth, but also acute grief at her sister's death. In a way, I think I was saying goodbye. I felt guilty and uplifted at the same time.”

- Christina



Red Nose Bereavement Support Services We support anyone affected by the loss of a pregnancy, stillbirth or the death of a baby or child.

24/7 Support Line 1300 308 307

support@rednose.org.au

Support Library rednosegriefandloss.org.au



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