

What can I do to get through this, Pregnancy after Loss?

There's no one answer. Chances are you'll feel anxious much of the time. But as you reach each milestone, such as hearing the heartbeat or feeling fetal movement, you'll be reassured that things are progressing well. Here are some things you can do to stay positive.

Take it one day at a time. Easier said than done, but it really works. When you feel yourself worrying about the future, stop yourself and think only about today. "Affirm each day," suggests Nelson. "Celebrate the completion of each week." Notice how this pregnancy is different from the pregnancy in which you suffered a loss, and especially how things are going better. Pay attention to what's going well each day and how you and your baby are staying healthy.

Take good care of yourself. Focus on what you can do to make this pregnancy a healthy one. Pay attention to your health and physical well-being. Sleep, good nutrition, taking breaks and regular physical activity will help you feel physically well and emotionally balanced. Deal sensibly with stress — you have enough coping with the loss you've experienced. Don't overschedule yourself, pile on responsibilities at home or work, or overcommit yourself to family and friends. Studies have shown that too much stress can jeopardize the health of your pregnancy, so focus on taking good care of yourself, which is within your control.

Try some relaxation exercises. Make up your own mantra, such as, "Be healthy for the baby." Nelson suggests talking to the baby to aid the bonding process. Use relaxation techniques if your worries are keeping you from getting enough sleep at night. Should your worries keep you up at night for a week or two, or occur nightly for a week, talk to your healthcare provider.

Do your homework, if that helps. If a past loss was diagnosed as a blighted ovum or an incompetent cervix, for example, you might want to read as much as you can about those conditions. You may feel more in control of your situation if you understand what happened before. But if too much reading makes you feel more overwhelmed, put the books away.

Know that you're not alone. If you don't know what caused you to lose your last baby, recognize that many miscarriages and stillbirths don't have explanations. Remember that having had one miscarriage doesn't make you any more likely to have another one. Almost half of women, experience a pregnancy loss at some point in their lives. Try to focus on how well you and the baby are doing now instead of worrying about things going wrong, because the chances are good that everything will be fine.

Communicate with your partner. Your partner suffered a loss, too, and you may want to look to each other for comfort. Remember, though, that men often deal differently with loss than women and while talking about what happened may make you feel better, it may make your partner feel worse. Respect each other's ways of coping with the loss and don't feel unsupported or take it personally if you deal with it in different ways.

Talk to your doctor or midwife often. Seeing your practitioner regularly for prenatal care can reassure you that your baby is doing well. This is particularly important if you're considered high risk. While it sounds scary, being labeled high risk can be beneficial. "You'll be monitored more closely, which can be a positive thing, especially if you're nervous," says Nelson. Ask to come in between visits to listen to the heartbeat if it will make you feel better. If your caregiver isn't sensitive to your past loss, it might be time to find someone else.

Find a support group, or think about some short-term therapy. Kluger-Bell suggests contacting SHARE, an organization devoted to pregnancy and infant loss support, to help you find a group in your area. Meeting with strangers may make you uncomfortable to begin with, but often the group members will become trusted friends who truly understand your feelings. If for some reason the particular group you're attending doesn't seem right for you, ask your caregiver for other options. You'll also find ongoing support in the BabyCenter Community in our Pregnancy After Loss group. ~www.babycenter.com

If you have a poem or story
you would like to share
about your precious angel,
please email it to
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