

Can Women Have Postpartum Depression After a Miscarriage?

By [Krissi Danielsson](#)  | Updated March 14, 2019

Many women find that experiencing a miscarriage at any stage of pregnancy can lead to a range of emotions. But can you experience [postpartum depression](#) after a miscarriage?

Grieving After a Miscarriage

It is normal to feel grief, even intense grief, after a [miscarriage](#)—no matter how early in your pregnancy the miscarriage occurs.

Once you discover that you're pregnant, your entire world changes. Physically, you may experience [early pregnancy symptoms](#) such as nausea, tender breasts, fatigue, and increased urination. And emotionally, you likely start to think about—and get excited about—how wonderful your life is about to become with a brand new, smiling, gurgling baby.

Perhaps you dream about whether the baby will be a boy or girl, who he or she will look like, and what his or her personality will be. Maybe you even envision moving to a suburb and buying a home or changing your professional life to accommodate the new child.

So if you suddenly lose a pregnancy, you don't just lose the fetus—you also lose that entire future that you had been planning in your head for days, weeks, or months. It's understandable if you feel shaken and overwhelmed when something like that happens.

Miscarriage and Clinical Depression

As for whether [miscarriage grief](#) can become postpartum depression, it is definitely possible that you could be clinically depressed in the aftermath of your miscarriage. The [line between grief and depression](#) that requires treatment can be hard to distinguish sometimes, since the two have nearly identical symptoms, but here's the key: If your feelings are interfering with your ability to go about your daily routines for more than a few weeks after your miscarriage, it is a good idea to talk to your doctor to see if you might benefit from treatment for depression. Even if you're just wondering whether you might need help, let your doctor know so you can discuss it.

How to Know If It's Depression

As noted earlier, it can be very difficult to distinguish between normal grief over a loss of a baby and all that baby meant in your life, and clinical depression. Studies are mixed, showing rates of "minor" depression ranging from five percent up to 50 percent in women who have experienced early pregnancy loss. What is most important is that you seek help if you are feeling down. Studies suggest that when depression occurs after miscarriage, it may last for six to 12 months, or even longer.

You may wish to take our [depression quiz](#), but don't depend on a quiz or specific criteria to ask for help.

Treating Your Depression

You and your doctor can decide together whether the best intervention for your depression is medication (such as [anti-depressant drugs](#)), cognitive behavioral therapy (talk therapy), or a combination of the two. The right answer will likely depend on what symptoms you have, how intense and frequent they are, how long you've been feeling this way, how your symptoms are affecting your everyday life, and what other medications you may already be taking.

Talking to Family and Friends After a Miscarriage

It can be difficult talking to family members and friends after a miscarriage if they have not experienced a miscarriage themselves. You're likely to receive [platitudes about miscarriage](#), such as "at least you're young and can get pregnant again," or worse yet, "at least you didn't get to know the baby." Rather than being helpful as these comments are often intended, they can be hurtful, leaving you even more alone with your feelings. Many women find it helpful to seek out others in their family or group of friends, or even people online who have experienced a miscarriage. While there is nothing anyone can say, it can make you feel less alone to know that someone else has experienced at least a few of the feelings you are now coping with alone.

Other Emotions Associated With Miscarriage

Take note that you may feel a mixture of emotions beyond depression, including numbness, disbelief, anger, and guilt. These symptoms might also manifest themselves physically, according to the American Pregnancy Association, so you could also experience fatigue, crying spells, trouble sleeping, loss of hunger, and difficulty concentrating.

In any case, don't be afraid to seek help in dealing with your loss—and don't feel that there's anything wrong with you if you do need help in coping with your miscarriage.

Article Sources

- Brier, N. Grief Following Miscarriage: A Comprehensive Review of the Literature. *Journal of Womens Health*. 2008. 17(3):451-64.
- Klier, C., Geller, P., and R. Neugebauer. Minor Depressive Disorder in the Context of Miscarriage. *Journal of Affective Disorders*. 2000. 59(1):13-21.
- Radford, E., and M. Hughes. Women's Experiences of Early Miscarriage: Implications for Nursing Care. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*. 2015. 24(11-12):1457-65.