

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER!



#DidYouKnow Cascades Park's Waterfall will be turning blue October 13th in honor of SIDS and Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Month

OCTOBER IS PREGNANCY & INFANT LOSS AWARENESS MONTH

Every October, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) & National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month is observed to bring attention to this unfortunate problem. Losing a child during pregnancy or while in infancy is a painful experience many families face. For this reason, the month of October is also dedicated to honoring and remembering those who have lost a baby during pregnancy or infancy.

Dealing with death in the family is never easy. And losing a baby – whether through miscarriage or infancy – is no exception. Pregnancy and infant loss are devastating forms of loss that come with their own unique challenges. Janet Jaffe, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist, and co-founder of the Center for Reproductive Psychology in San Diego stated, "One of the biggest differences is that losing a pregnancy, or a baby is a loss of the future rather than of the past."

The loss of a child does not come with instructions on how to grieve. Grieving families often experience a variety of emotions, including sadness, anger, guilt, shame, and emptiness. But It's important for parents to allow themselves as much time as necessary to recover from the grieving process. Healing time between family members will vary, but eventually, all members will find peace again. So, remember that your body and your emotions need time to recover after pregnancy. There's no right amount of time to grieve. It takes as long as it takes for you. Over time, you can find peace, but in the meanwhile take care of yourself, physically and emotionally.

"Are You at Higher Risk for Pregnancy & Infant loss?" Go to **Page 4** for the Quiz

IN THIS ISSUE:

National Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Month

**A Path to Healing:
Pregnancy & Infant Loss
Resource Guide**

Quiz:
**Are You at Higher Risk for
Pregnancy & Infant Loss?**

A Path to Healing: Pregnancy & Infant Loss Resource Guide

Grief is all the feelings you have when someone close to you dies. It is a natural response to loss, so you may have a lot of feelings as you grieve. You may feel depressed, angry, guilty, and confused, but these emotions are all a part of the grieving process.

Whether the loss was recent or decades ago, the pain experienced by parents who have lost a child never fully goes away. But no matter how long ago this loss occurred, it is important to find support and resources to guide you through this process.

Here - at Capital Area Healthy Start - our goal is that all pregnant women that we meet in the community or through the Healthy Start program have a healthy pregnancy and birth. But unfortunately, not every pregnancy results in a healthy baby. For this reason, we have put together information and resources to help our community's families through their grieving process.

Types of Pregnancy Loss:

- **Embryonic pregnancy.** The egg is fertilized, but it never develops into an embryo.
- **Miscarriage.** The the loss of your baby before 20 weeks of pregnancy. This is pregnancy loss before 13 weeks of pregnancy. It is also called spontaneous abortion.
- **Ectopic pregnancy.** The fetus develops outside the uterus. This might be in a fallopian tube, the cervix, or the pelvis or abdomen.
- **Molar pregnancy.** The placenta and fetal tissues do not develop normally.
- **Stillbirth.** This is when the fetus dies after 20 weeks of pregnancy.

Leading Causes of Infant Loss:

Infant mortality is the death of an infant before his or her first birthday. Almost 20,000 infants died in the United States in 2020. The five leading causes of infant death in 2020 were:

- Birth defects.
- Preterm birth and low birth weight.
- Sudden infant death syndrome.
- Injuries (e.g., suffocation).
- Maternal pregnancy complications.

Often, there are no definite ways to prevent many of the leading causes of infant mortality. However, there are ways to reduce a baby's risk, like healthy pregnancy nutrition, breastfeeding, and the ABC's of safe sleep.

You Are NOT Alone!

- About **10 to 15 percent** or (10 to 15 in 100 pregnancies) end in miscarriage (we don't know the exact number because a miscarriage may happen before a woman knows she's pregnant).
- Only about **1 in 100 women (1 percent)** have repeat miscarriages.
- In the United States, nearly **24,000** babies are stillborn every year
- For most women, the chances of having another stillbirth are very low. Less than **1 in 100 women (less than 1 percent)** who've had a stillbirth go on to have another stillbirth.

After Loss Recovery Tips

It can take a few weeks to a month or more for your body to recover from a miscarriage. Most women get their period again 4 to 6 weeks after a miscarriage, but it may take longer to recover emotionally.

- Give yourself time & space to grieve.
- Seek support when ready.
- Let go of personal blame.
- Eat warm & nourishing foods.
- Take an iron supplement.
- Hydrate.
- Allow time for rest.
- Don't push physical activity
- Seek immediate help if physical or emotional symptoms are worrying you

A Path to Healing: Continued

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Resources

- **Big Bend Hospice**
<https://bigbendhospice.org/bereavement/>
(850) 878-5310 or (800) 772-5862
- **Lee's Place**
<https://leesplace.org/>
(850) 841-7733
216 Lake Ella Drive, Tallahassee, FL, 32303
- **Lola Brognano LCSW, PMH-C**
(850) 888-0136

Ways to Honor Your Loss.

Families dealing with loss often find it comforting to create a memorial to remember their baby. In fact, many researchers believe honoring a child may be the most healthy and crucial way to cope with a loss.

1. Name Your Baby.
2. Wear or Make Memorial Jewelry.
3. Write About Your Baby.
4. Plant a Memorial Tree or Garden.
5. Display an Angel Statuette.
6. Order a Memorial Plaque or Crystal.
7. Get a Special Teddy Bear or Pillow.
8. Observe Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Month.
9. Celebrate Birthdays.
10. Pray (if spiritual)

Risk Factors:

- **Age.** Women before the age of 20 and after age 35 have a higher risk of miscarriage.
- **Previous miscarriages.** Women who have had two or more consecutive miscarriages are at higher risk of miscarriage.
- **Chronic conditions.** Women who have a chronic condition, such as uncontrolled diabetes, have a higher risk of miscarriage.
- **Uterine or cervical problems.** Certain uterine conditions or weak cervical tissues (incompetent cervix) might increase the risk of miscarriage.
- **Smoking, alcohol and illicit drugs.** Women who smoke during pregnancy have a greater risk of miscarriage than do nonsmokers. Heavy alcohol use and illicit drug use also increase the risk of miscarriage.
- **Weight.** Being underweight or being overweight has been linked with an increased risk of miscarriage.
- **Invasive prenatal tests.** Some invasive prenatal genetic tests, such as chorionic villus sampling and amniocentesis, carry a slight risk of miscarriage.
- **STDs.** Untreated infections can lead to miscarriage

Actions to Prevent Pregnancy & Infant Loss

- Taking folic acid during pregnancy.
- Eating healthily.
- Exercising.
- Avoid smoking, drugs, and alcohol.
- Limiting caffeine.
- Controlling stress.
- Being at a healthy weight.
- Breastfeeding.
- Following safe sleep practices (The ABCs of Safe sleep).
- Following proper birth spacing (18-month rest period in between births).
- Practicing fetal movement counting, often called kick counting.





ARE YOU AT HIGHER RISK FOR PREGNANCY & INFANT LOSS?

with your healthcare provider immediately, so you can receive needed services. It is also important to mention that Healthy Start's Connect program, also known as Coordinated Intake and Referral Program (CI&R), assists pregnant women, new moms, and families with young children by providing a one-stop entry point for needed services and programs.

This quiz was designed ONLY for educational purposes. It provides information about common risk factors that can lead to pregnancy and infant loss. If you notice that you have some of these risk factors, please discuss them

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1. Women under the age of 17 and over the age of 35 are at higher risk for pregnancy complication?
A) True
B) False
 2. Babies born to mothers with untreated mental health conditions are at higher risk for?
A) Low Birth Weight or Small Head Size
B) Preterm Birth
C) Longer Stays in the Neonatal Care Unit (NICU)
D) All The Above
 3. Smoking tobacco during pregnancy can put a baby at risk for _____?
A) Preterm Birth
B) Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
C) Stillbirth
D) All the Above
 4. Using alcohol and drugs can interfere with a baby's brain development during pregnancy?
A) True
B) False
 5. Which of the following answers is NOT a risk factor for pregnancy and infant loss?
A) Obesity
B) Chronic High Blood Pressure
C) Exercising
D) STDs
 6. Black women are the most at risk for pregnancy and Infant loss?
A) True
B) False

TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE TO SEE THE ANSWERS & EXPLANATIONS!

ANSWER & EXPLANTATIONS

- 1) Women under the age of 17 and over the age of 35 are at higher risk for pregnancy complication?
 - **True.** Pregnant teens are more likely to develop pregnancy-related high blood pressure and anemia (lack of healthy red blood cells) and to go through preterm (early) labor and delivery than women who are older. Similarly, women over the age of 35 are at higher risk for certain problems than younger women, including: Pregnancy-related high blood pressure, pregnancy loss and ectopic pregnancy (when the embryo attaches itself outside the uterus), is a condition that can be life-threatening.
- 2) Babies born to mothers with untreated mental health conditions are at higher risk for_____?
 - **All the above.** Babies born to mothers with untreated mental health conditions are more at risk for low birth weight or a small head size, preterm birth, longer stays in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), or have behavioral, cognitive or emotional developmental problems.
- 3) Smoking tobacco during pregnancy can put a baby at risk for _____?
 - **All the Above.** Smoking during pregnancy puts the fetus at risk for preterm birth, certain birth defects, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). One study showed that smoking doubled or even tripled the risk of stillbirth, or fetal death after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Research has also found that smoking during pregnancy leads to changes in an infant's immune system. Secondhand smoke also puts a woman and her developing fetus at increased risk for health problems.
- 4) Using alcohol and drugs can interfere with a baby's brain development during pregnancy?
 - **True.** Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can increase the baby's risk for fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs), sudden infant death syndrome, and other problems. FASDs effects range from mild to severe, and they include intellectual and developmental disabilities; behavior problems; abnormal facial features; and disorders of the heart, kidneys, bones, and hearing. FASDs are completely preventable: If a woman does not drink alcohol while she is pregnant, her child will not have FASD. Women who drink also are more likely to have a miscarriage or stillbirth.
- 5) Which of the following answers is NOT a risk factor for pregnancy and infant loss?
 - **Exercising.** In fact, the Mayo Clinic recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise is recommended on most, if not all, days of the week. However, obesity, chronic high blood pressure, and STDs are common risk factors for pregnancy and infant loss.
- 6) Black women are the most at risk for pregnancy and Infant loss?
 - **True.** African American women are at higher risk of pregnancy and infant loss compared to any other racial group in the United States. Many factors influence these preterm births, including individual or family history, psychological stress, poverty, lack of access to quality healthcare, discrimination, and underemployment. In African American communities, many of these factors are unfortunately more common.

Urgent Postpartum Warning Signs!



- Headache that won't go away or get worse over time
- Dizziness or Fainting
- Changes in your vision
- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Extreme swelling of your hands or face
- Thoughts about harming yourself or your baby
- Trouble breathing
- Chest pain or fast-beating heart
- Severe nausea and throwing up
- Severe belly pain that doesn't go away
- Baby's movement stopping or slowing
- Vaginal bleeding or fluid leaking during pregnancy
- Vaginal bleeding or discharge after pregnancy
- Severe swelling, redness or pain of your leg or arm
- Overwhelming tiredness

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Upcoming Events

No footprint is too small to leave an imprint on this world.

Walk to Remember is a non-denominational memorial service and walk, dedicated to local grieving families who have experienced pregnancy and infant loss.

This year's event will take place at St. Paul's United Methodist Church 1700 N. Meridian Road, from 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

For more information about the event & registration, please visit <https://CapitalAreaHealthyStart.org/walk-to-remember/>



St. Paul's United Methodist Church
5:30p.m. - 8:00p.m.

Thursday, October 13, 2022

What is CONNECT?

Capital Area Healthy Start is dedicated to connecting new or expecting moms and families with community programs to help them during every parenthood stage. Our Connect program, also known as CI&R, assists pregnant women, caregivers, and families with young children by providing a one-stop entry point for needed services, such as healthy pregnancy education, child development education,



breastfeeding education, women's health education, and care coordination. Connect works to identify a family's needs and link them with local programs that can best serve them, creating a referral process that not only streamlines access to services but works to build a larger network of care during early childhood.



Please click [HERE](https://www.capitalareahealthystart.org/connect-program/) to learn more or visit our website at www.capitalareahealthystart.org/connect-program/